

“Descent of the Deities: The Water-Land Retreat and the Transformation of the Visual Culture of
Song-Dynasty (960-1279) Buddhism”

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Abstract

This dissertation identifies a paradox at the heart of the visual culture of Song-dynasty (960-1279) Buddhism. On the one hand, as the celestial pantheon expanded, it was conceptualized in ever more bureaucratic ways, mirroring the growth of the terrestrial government itself. On the other hand, the boundary separating that supramundane realm from the human world became decidedly more permeable; ghosts and deities became an omnipresent part of daily life. How to treat these two contradictory phenomena—one pointing to rational orderliness, the other pointing to unpredictable unruliness—posed a distinct problem for Song visual artists, spurring the development of new strategies of pictorial representation and forcing reflection upon the nature of representation itself. Chinese Buddhist art was never to be the same again.

I argue that the key to understanding these new forms of art lies in the Water-Land Retreat (*Shuilu zhai*), a massive, icon-filled ritual of decidedly cosmic pretensions. The patterns of practice and strategies of visual representation associated with this ritual constitute a system that radically broke with earlier Chinese tradition. Practitioners of the liturgy created an open ritual syntax that allowed it to take on myriad forms in accordance with its sponsors’ needs, while also allowing it to absorb deities and practices from non-Buddhist traditions.

This dissertation examines these phenomena in three parts. Part 1 excavates the social place, methods of practice, and visual profile of the Water-Land Retreat in and around the Song.

Relying extensively on paintings from the Jiangnan region, cliff carvings from Sichuan, and numerous liturgical manuscripts, I argue that image and practice are inextricably bound in this ritual. Part 2 focuses on the motif of the cloud in Water-Land-related images and texts. Through an examination of images of cloud-borne descending deities, I contend that this nebulous motif became the locus for reflection on the mediational nature of representation. Finally, Part 3 addresses the bureaucratization of ritual practice and pictorial production in Song Buddhism. I argue that practitioners of the Water-Land Retreat simultaneously embraced and transcended a bureaucratic idiom drawn from Daoism and contemporary government to create a new Buddhist vision of the cosmos.

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Collection of Chion-in 知恩院, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 170, fig. 120.

- 1.26** *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 120.2 cm x 52.6 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Hirokawa-dera 弘川寺, Osaka, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 173, fig. 122.

- 1.27** Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.
Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.28** Detail of canopy.
Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.
Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.29** Right wall.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

1.30 Left wall.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

1.31 Detail of King Guang of Qin 秦廣王, first of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

1.32 Detail of the King of the Five Offices 五官王, fourth of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

1.33 Detail of infernal messenger.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.34** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Lohan Manifesting Himself as an Eleven-Headed Guanyin* 應身觀音, one of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 06.289.

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- 1.35** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Promoting the Five Hundred Arhats* 勸進五百羅漢, second of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.7 cm x 52.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 114, fig. 104.

- 1.36** Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Dharma Assembly* 法會 (or *Visit to the Palace* 宮殿への訪問), twenty-fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Daitoku-ji denrai Gohyaku rakan zu: Meibun chōsa hōkoku sho* 大徳寺伝来五百羅漢図: 銘文調査報告書 (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2011), 35, fig. 24.

- 1.37** Lin Tinggui 林庭珪, *Lohans Feeding a Hungry Spirit* 施飯餓鬼, one of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.4 cm x 53.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 06.292.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.

- 1.38** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Flight to Hell* 地獄への飛来, seventy-third of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.1 cm x 51.6 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 150, fig. 104.

- 1.39** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Release of Living Beings* 放生, forty-fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.1 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188. Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 135, fig. 104.

- 1.40** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Sutra Lecture or Copying* 講經 or 寫經, thirty-seventh of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.9 cm x 52 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188. Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 132, fig. 104.

- 1.41** Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Offerings to an Icon of Amitābha* 阿弥陀画像供養, thirty-fifth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 112.8 cm x 52.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1179. Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 131, fig. 104.

- 1.42** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Worship of an Icon of Avalokiteśvara* 観音画像の礼拝, thirty-sixth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 107.6 cm x 52.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188. Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 131, fig. 104.

- 1.43** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Offerings for an Elite Woman* 貴女の供養, eighteenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.4 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 122, fig. 104.

- 1.44** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Ascending the Hall* 上堂, sixteenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.4 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 121, fig. 104.

- 1.45** Lin Tinggui 林庭珪, *Shaving* 剃髮, forty-ninth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 113.2 cm x 52.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1180.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 138, fig. 104.

- 1.46** Zhou Jichang 周季常, *The Rock Bridge at Mount Tiantai* 天台石橋, one of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.9 cm x 52.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1907.139

Source: “Chinese Art | The Rock Bridge at Mount Tiantai, F1907.139,” accessed 15 May 2013, <<http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/zoomObject.cfm?ObjectId=3358>>.

- 1.47** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Supernatural Powers* 怪力, sixty-third of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.0 cm x 51.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 145, fig. 104.

- 1.48** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *The Monk from Tang [Xuanzang] Collects Sutras* 唐僧取經, seventy-seventh of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.3 cm x 52.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 152, fig. 104.

- 1.49** Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Offerings from an Earth God* 地神の供養, tenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 112.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 118, fig. 104.

- 1.50** Confucius and his ten disciples 文宣王十哲; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 1.94 m x 3.25 m x 1.48 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1088.

Niche 6, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.51** The Buddhas Vairocana 毘盧遮那佛, Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼佛, and Maitreya 彌勒佛; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 1.47 m x 6.36 m x 1.38 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1082.

Niche 7, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.52** Detail of Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那佛.

The Buddhas Vairocana 毘盧遮那佛, Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼佛, and Maitreya 彌勒佛; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 1.47 m x 6.36 m x 1.38 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1082.

Niche 7, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.53** Fohui Monastery Pagoda 佛惠寺塔; carved red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.54** Detail of half-open door.
Fohui Monastery Pagoda 佛惠寺塔; carved red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.55** Fohui Monastery 佛惠寺; Qing dynasty (1644-1911), 1901.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, October 2009.

- 1.56** Avalokiteśvara 觀音, Yan Xun 嚴遜, and wife; carved and polychromed red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.57** Detail of Yan Xun 嚴遜.
Avalokiteśvara 觀音, Yan Xun 嚴遜, and wife; carved and polychromed red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.58** Stele; carved sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1090.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.59** Laojun 老君 and immortals; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.70 m x 3.43 m x 1.92 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1083.

Niche 8, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.60** Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 地藏十王; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.80 m x 5.50 m x 1.54 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1096.
Niche 9, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.61** Tejaprabhā and the Eleven Luminaries 熾盛光佛十一活躍; carved and polychromed sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.62** Vajrapāṇi 金剛力士; carved and polychromed red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1082.
Exterior of Niche 7, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.63** Mañjuśrī 文殊 and Samantabhadra 普賢; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.46 m x 1.49 m x 1.83 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1090.
Niche 5, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.64** Hārītī 訶利帝母; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.10 m x 2.53 m x 1.10 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Niche 1, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, October 2009.

- 1.65** Earth God 土地; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.55 m x 1.65 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Niche 3, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.66** The Medicine King Sun Simiao 藥王孫真人; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.06 m x .90 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Niche 4, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 1.67** The monk Baozhi 寶誌 and an attendant; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.34 m x 2.54 m x 1.72 m (1.64 m above ground level); Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1085.
Niche 2, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

Part 2

- 2.1** *Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat*; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.
West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 34, fig. 9.

- 2.2** Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那佛.
Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.
West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 35, fig. 10.

- 2.3** Śākyamuni Buddha 釋迦牟尼佛.
Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.
West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 36, fig. 11.

- 2.4** Cloud-borne immortal.
Audience with the Origin 朝元圖; ink and colors on plaster; ca. 1247-1262.

East wall, Sanqing dian 三清殿 (Hall of the Three Purities), Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy), Ruicheng 芮城, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 102, fig. 84.

2.5 Three Bodies of the Buddha 三身佛.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Qing dynasty (1644-1911), 1659.

East wall, Pilu dian 毘盧殿 (Vairocana Hall), Guangsheng shang si 廣勝上寺 (Upper Monastery of Vast Excellence), Hongdong County 洪洞縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: SXFSBH, 203, fig. 219.

2.6 Mythical beast with bands of *qi* at lower left; painted brick; Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), 1st century BCE.

Tomb of Bo Qianqiu 卜千秋, Shaogou cun 燒沟村, Luoyang 洛陽, Henan Province, China. Now in the collection of the Luoyang Museum of Ancient Tombs 洛陽古墓博物館, Luoyang, Henan Province, China.

Source: *Zhongguo chutu bishua quanji* 中國出土壁畫全集, vol. 5, *Henan* 河南, edited by Sun Xinmin 孫新民 et al. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 13, fig. 11.

2.7 Flat dish; lacquered wood; d.: 57.8 cm, h.: 4 cm; Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), 2nd century BCE.

Excavated from Tomb No. 3, Mawangdui 馬王堆, Changsha 長沙, Hunan Province, China. Excavated between 1972 and 1974. Now in the collection of the Hunan Provincial Museum 湖南省博物館, Changsha, Hunan Province, China.

Source: *Noble Tombs at Mawangdui: Art and Life of the Changsha Kingdom, Third Century BCE to First Century CE* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2008), 121, fig. 15.

2.8 Maitreya 彌勒菩薩.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 37, fig. 12.

2.9 Bodhisattvas 菩薩.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 38, fig. 13.

2.10 Brahma and His Saintly Entourage 梵天聖眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 39, fig. 14.

2.11 Indra and His Saintly Entourage 帝釋聖眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 46, fig. 21.

2.12 Monk.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 34, fig. 9 (detail).

2.13 The Prince of the Sun Palace and His Entourage 日宮天子眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 40, fig. 15.

2.14 The Prince of the Moon Palace and His Entourage 月宮天子眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 49, fig. 24.

2.15 *Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat*; ink and colors on plaster; late Ming (1368-1644) or early Qing (1644-1911) dynasty, ca. 17th century.

South wall, Chuanfa zhengzong dian 傳法正宗殿 (Hall of the Transmission of the Dharma of the Orthodox School), Yong'an si 永安寺 (Monastery of Eternal Peace), Hunyuan County 渾源縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: SXFSBH, 195, fig. 200.

2.16 Spirits of the Twelve Primes 十二元神眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 53, fig. 28.

2.17 Dharma-Protecting Benevolent Spirits 護法善神.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: ZGSG, vol. 2, 55, fig. 32.

2.18 *Kṣitigarbha* 地藏菩薩; ink and colors on silk; 124 cm x 62 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 13.

2.19 *Taiyi and His Entourage of Myriad Spirits* 太乙諸神眾; ink and colors on silk; 116 cm x 61 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 58.

2.20 *The Arhats Piṇḍolabbaradvāja* 跋羅墮尊 and *Kanakavatsa* 伽伐蹉尊; ink and colors on silk; 119 cm x 61.5 cm; Ming (1368-1644) dynasty, early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 32.

- 2.21** *City Gods of All Municipalities and Earth Gods of All Districts* 諸郡城隍諸司土地之神; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 214 cm x 103 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1600. Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 734).

Source: Stephen Little et al., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 261, fig. 85.

- 2.22** *The Star-Lords of Good Fortune, Emolument, and Longevity* 福祿壽星君眾; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 78 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454. Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 734).

Source: Stephen Little et al., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 2000), 270, fig. 91.

- 2.23** Buddhas of the Five Directions 五方如來.
Shuilu daochang guishen tu 水陸道場鬼神圖; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 24 cm x 15 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1465-1487.
Collection of the National Library of China 中國國家圖書館, Beijing, China.

Source: *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan er bian* 中國古代版畫叢刊二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), vol. 2, 2.

- 2.24** Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; carved sandstone; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 16th century.
Cave 5, Baoyan si 寶巖寺 (Treasure Cliff Monastery), also known as Jindeng si 金燈寺 (Golden Lamp Monastery), Pingshun County 平順縣, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: Yang Lie 楊烈, “Baoyan si Ming dai shiku 寶巖寺明代石窟,” *Wenwu* 文物 134 (December 1961): 8.

- 2.25** Assembly of Rocana 盧舍那佛 (or Vairocana 毗盧遮那佛), Mañjuśrī 文殊, and Samantabhadra 普賢; stone relief; 146 cm x 150 cm; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1022.
Feilai feng 飛來峰, Hangzhou 杭州, Zhejiang Province, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, July 2011.

- 2.26** Mañjuśrī 文殊 and Samantabhadra 普賢; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 57 cm x 29 cm each; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 985.
Seiryō-ji 清涼寺, Kyoto, Japan.
- Source: Oku Takeo 奥健夫, “Seiryō-ji Shaka nyorai zō 清涼寺釈迦如来像,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 513 (February 2009): n. p., fig. 9.
- 2.27** Frontispiece.
Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen 天地冥陽水陸齋儀文; woodblock-printed ink on paper; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1520-1620.
- Source: TDMY, fasc. 1, 1a.
- © The East Asian Library and the Gest Collection, Princeton University.
- 2.28** Tang-dynasty (618-907) “treasure-cloud pattern 寶雲文.”
- Source: Kosgui Kazuo 小杉一雄, “Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について,” *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): n. p., fig. 1, A.
- 2.29** Early cloud patterns.
- Source: Kosgui Kazuo 小杉一雄, “Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について,” *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): n. p., fig. 1, B-D.
- 2.30** Figure mounted on vegetal clouds.
- Source: Kosgui Kazuo 小杉一雄, “Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について,” *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): n. p., fig. 2, C.
- 2.31** Detail of bands of *qi* and mythical creatures.
Second of four coffins; lacquer on wood; Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), ca. 168 BCE.
Excavated from Tomb No. 1 (the Tomb of Lady Dai 軟侯夫人), Mawangdui 馬王堆, Changsha 長沙, Hunan Province, China. Excavated in 1972. Now in the collection of the Hunan Provincial Museum 湖南省博物館, Changsha, Hunan Province, China.
- Source: *Oriental Arts* 40, no. 2 (March 2009): cover.
- 2.32** White Tiger 白虎, Red Bird 朱雀, and crucible; ink rubbing of stone sarcophagus; Eastern Han dynasty (25-220).
Sarcophagus No. 4, Luzhou 瀘州, Sichuan Province, China. Excavated in 1974. Now in the collection of the Luzhou City Museum 瀘州市博物館, Luzhou, Sichuan Province, China.

Source: Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections - Slides and Digital Images, d2004.03271.

- 2.33** Queen Mother of the West 西王母; ink and colors on plaster; Xin dynasty (9-23).
Tomb excavated in 1991 near Xin cun 辛村, Gaolong xiang 高龍鄉, Yanshi City 偃師市, Henan Province, China.

Source: *Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji* 中國出土壁畫全集, vol. 5, *Henan* 河南, edited by Sun Xinmin 孫新民 et al. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 46, fig. 43.

- 2.34** Astral deities and constellations; ink and colors on plaster; Xin dynasty (9-23).
Tomb excavated in 2009 near Er cun 二村, Yangqiaopan 楊橋畔, Jingbian County 靖邊縣, Shaanxi Province, China.

Source: *Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji* 中國出土壁畫全集, vol. 6, bk. 1, *Shaanxi* 陝西上, edited by Yin Shenping 尹申平 et al. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 47, fig. 44.

- 2.35** Cloud chariot; ink and colors on brick; Eastern Han dynasty (25-220).
Tomb excavated in 2005 near Yangyi cun 楊一村, Yangqiaopan 楊橋畔, Jingbian County 靖邊縣, Shaanxi Province, China.

Source: *Zhongguo chutu bihua quanji* 中國出土壁畫全集, vol. 6, bk. 1, *Shaanxi* 陝西上, edited by Yin Shenping 尹申平 et al. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 85, fig. 91.

- 2.36** *Apsarases* 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Northern Liang dynasty (397-439).
Upper register, north wall, Cave 272, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 1, n. p., fig. 8.

- 2.37** *Apsarases* 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Northern Wei dynasty (386-535).
Front ceiling slope, Cave 248, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 1, n. p., fig. 85.

- 2.38** Celestial deities; ink and colors on plaster; Western Wei dynasty (535-557).
Ceiling, Cave 285, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 1, n. p., fig. 114.

- 2.39** *Apsarases* 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Western Wei dynasty (535-557).

Upper register, south wall, Cave 285, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 1, n. p., fig. 138.

- 2.40** The nocturnal escape of the Buddha from his palace; ink and colors on plaster; Sui dynasty (589-618).
West wall, Cave 278, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 2, n. p., fig. 115.

- 2.41** *Apsarases* 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Sui dynasty (589-618).
Niche ceiling, north wall, Cave 401, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 2, n. p., fig. 140.

- 2.42** Western Pure Land tableau; carved stone; Northern Qi dynasty (550-577).
Cave 2, Xiangtang shan 響堂山, Hebei Province, China.
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase F1921.2.

Source: “Chinese Art | Western Paradise of the Buddha Amitabha,” accessed 23 August 2012, <<http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/singleObject.cfm?ObjectNumber=F1921.2>>

- 2.43** Mountain-shaped incense censer (*boshanlu* 博山爐); bronze inlaid with gold; h. 26cm; Western Han (206 BCE-9 CE) dynasty, ca. 113 BCE.
Tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝, Mancheng County 滿城縣, Hebei Province, China. Excavated in 1968. Now in the collection of the Hebei Provincial Museum 河北省博物館, Shijiazhuang 石家莊, Hebei Province, China.

Source: *Zhongguo zhongda kaogu faxian* 中國重大考古發現 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1990), 142.

- 2.44** *Lotus Sutra* tableau 法華經變; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
Cave 23, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: *Fahua jing hua juan* 法華經畫卷, edited by He Shizhe 賀世哲, Dunhuang shiku quanji 敦煌石窟全集 7 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 74.

- 2.45** *Vimalakīrti Sutra* tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.
East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 61.

2.46 “The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs 藥草喻品.”

Lotus Sutra tableau 法華經變; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
North wall, Cave 23, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: *Fahua jing hua juan* 法華經畫卷, edited by He Shizhe 賀世哲, Dunhuang shiku quanji 敦煌石窟全集 7 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 75, n. 65.

2.47 Bodhisattvas from the Land of Sumeru Shape 須彌相國.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.
East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 61 (detail).

2.48 Assemblies of bodhisattvas accompanying the Buddha Fragrance Accumulated 香積佛.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.
East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 61 (detail).

2.49 Bodhisattvas from the Land of Many Fragrances 眾香國.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.
East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 61 (detail).

2.50 Land of Wonderful Joy 妙喜國.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.
East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 61 (detail).

2.51 Western Pure Land tableau 西方極樂淨土變; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).

North wall, Cave 45, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 136.

- 2.52** Eastern Pure Land tableau 東方淨土變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712).
North wall, Cave 220, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: DHMGK, vol. 3, n. p., fig. 27.
- 2.53** Mañjuśrī 文殊 and assembly; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
North ceiling slope, Cave 31, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), pl. 16.
- 2.54** Jōchō 定朝 (d. 1057), mandorla for a seated sculpture of Amitābha Buddha; lacquered and gilded wood; Heian period (794-1185), 1053.
Byōdō-in 平等院, Uji 宇治, Japan.

Source: *Byōdō-in: Ōchō no bi* 平等院: 王朝の美, edited by Kamii Monshō 神居文彰, Bessatsu taiyō (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2009), 106.
- 2.55** Detail.
Jōchō 定朝 (d. 1057), mandorla for a seated sculpture of Amitābha Buddha; lacquered and gilded wood; Heian period (794-1185), 1053.
Byōdō-in 平等院, Uji 宇治, Japan.

Source: Sarai Mai 皿井舞, “Heian jidai chūki ni okeru kōhai ishō no tenkan: Byōdō-in Hōō-dō Amida nyoraizō kōhai ni okeru unmon no seiritsu wo chushin ni 平安時代中期における光背意匠の転換—平等院鳳凰堂阿弥陀如来像における雲文の成立を中心に,” *Bijutsushi* 美術史 152 [vol. 51, no. 2] (March 2002): 215, fig. 4.
- 2.56** Mandorla for a standing sculpture of Śākyamuni Buddha; Japanese cherry; Heian period (794-1185), late 11th century (?).
Seiryō-ji 清涼寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: Oku Takeo 奥健夫, “Seiryō-ji Shaka nyorai zō 清涼寺釈迦如来像,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 513 (February 2009): n. p., fig. 9.
- 2.57** Preaching Assembly; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
West ceiling slope, Cave 31, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

Source: Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), pl. 17.

- 2.58** East wall, tomb passageway, Wanzhang 灣漳 Tomb; Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), 560.
Wanzhang cun 灣漳村, Ci County 磁縣, Hebei Province, China. Excavated in 1989.

Source: Wu Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 214, fig. 211.

- 2.59** Green Dragon 青龍; ink and colors on plaster; l. ca. 450 cm; Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), 560.
East wall, tomb passageway, Wanzhang Tomb, Wanzhang cun 灣漳村, Ci County 磁縣, Hebei Province, China. Excavated in 1989. Now in the collection of the Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics 河北省文物研究所.

Source: *Zhongguo chutu bishu quanji* 中國出土壁畫全集, vol. 1, *Hebei* 河北, edited by Cao Kai 曹凱 et al. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 71, fig. 68.

- 2.60** White Tiger 白虎; ink and colors on plaster; 196 cm x 682 cm; Tang dynasty (618-907), 706.
West wall, tomb passageway, Tomb of Prince Yide 懿德太子墓, Qianling 乾陵, Qian County 乾縣, Shaanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shaanxi History Museum 陝西歷史博物館.

Source: *Zhongguo chutu bishu quanji* 中國出土壁畫全集, vol. 6, bk. 2, *Shaanxi* 陝西下, edited by Yin Shenping 尹申平 et al. (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2012), 296, fig. 273.

- 2.61** Mañjuśrī 文殊 and assembly; ink and colors on plaster; Five Dynasties (907-960).
North wall, Cave 35, Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, Anxi 安西, Gansu Province, China.

Source: *Anxi Yulin ku* 安西榆林窟, edited by Dunhuang yanjiu yuan 敦煌研究院, *Zhongguo shiku* 中國石窟 series (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997), n. p., fig. 81 (detail).

- 2.62** Detail of clouds.
Mañjuśrī 文殊 and assembly; ink and colors on plaster; Five Dynasties (907-960).
North wall, Cave 35, Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, Anxi 安西, Gansu Province, China.

Source: *Anxi Yulin ku* 安西榆林窟, edited by Dunhuang yanjiu yuan 敦煌研究院, *Zhongguo shiku* 中國石窟 series (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997), n. p., fig. 81 (detail).

- 2.63** The Eight Classes of *Devas* and Dragons 天龍八部; ink and colors on plaster; Five Dynasties (907-960).
North wall, antechamber, Cave 16, Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, Anxi 安西, Gansu Province, China.

Source: *Anxi Yulin ku* 安西榆林窟, edited by Dunhuang yanjiu yuan 敦煌研究院, Zhongguo shiku 中國石窟 series (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997), n. p., fig. 69.

- 2.64** *Vaiśravaṇa Crossing the Sea* 天王渡海; ink and colors on silk; 61.8 cm x 57.4 cm (painted area); Five Dynasties (907-960).
Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the British Museum, London, UK (1919,0101,0.45; Ch.0018).

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- 2.65** *Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva* 引路菩薩; ink and colors on silk; 80.5 cm x 53.8 cm; Late Tang period (848-907).
Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the British Museum, London, UK (1919,0101,0.47; Ch.lvii.002).

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- 2.66** *Thaumaturge* 聖僧; ink and colors on paper; Late Tang 晚唐 period (848-907) or Five Dynasties (907-960).
Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (MG 17683).

Source: *Seiiki bijutsu: Gime Bijutsukan Perio korekushon* 西域美術：ギメ美術館ペリオ・コレクション (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995), vol. 2, pl. 89.

- 2.67** *Avalokitesvara (Guanyin Pusa) Attended by Two Donors*; ink and colors on silk; 95.3 cm x 61.8 cm, Late Tang period (848-907).
Reportedly recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.
Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Second Fogg Expedition to China Fund, 1925.12.

Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

- 2.68** *Mañjuśrī* 文殊; woodblock-printed ink on paper; 31.5 cm x 20.4 cm; Five Dynasties (907-960).
Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the British Library, London, UK (Or.8210/P.20).

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- 2.69** Song-dynasty (960-1279) base of a Tang-dynasty (618-907) *dhāraṇī* pillar.

Baosheng si 保勝寺, Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu Province 江蘇省, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, March 2010.

- 2.70** Vaiśravaṇa 北方天王; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.95 m x 2.74 m x 1.45 m, figure: 2.50 m x .83m; Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 895.
Niche 5, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 2.71** Thousand-Armed Guanyin 千手觀音; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.90 m x 2.70 m x 1.42 m; Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 892-895.
Niche 9, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 2.72** Jin Dashou 金大受 (act. mid 12th century), second of *Sixteen Arhats* 十六羅漢圖; ink and colors on silk; 111.6 cm x 50.2 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 12th century. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum 東京国立博物館, Tokyo, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 160, fig. 111.

- 2.73** *Rakan* 羅漢; ink and colors on silk; 101.5 cm x 40.3 cm; Muromachi period (1338-1573), ca. 15th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fenollosa-Weld Collection, 11.4085.

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Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, July 2012.

- 2.74** Detail of clouds.
Rakan 羅漢, ink and colors on silk, 101.5 cm x 40.3 cm, Muromachi period (1338-1573), ca. 15th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fenollosa-Weld Collection, 11.4085.

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Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, July 2012.

- 2.75** *Perfect Enlightenment Sutra Illumination* 圓覺經變相圖; ink and colors on silk; 165.5 cm x 85.5 cm; Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), late 13th to early 14th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6142.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.

2.76 Detail of clouds.

Perfect Enlightenment Sutra Illumination 圓覺經變相圖; ink and colors on silk; 165.5 cm x 85.5 cm; Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), late 13th to early 14th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6142.

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Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, May 2012.

2.77 Detail of “The Senior Arbiter of Fate 大司命.”

The Nine Songs of Qu Yuan 九歌圖書畫卷; ink and colors on silk; 24.7 cm x 608.5 cm; attrib. Southern Song (1127-1279) or Jin (1115-1234) dynasty, second quarter of the 13th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Archibald Cary Coolidge Fund, 34.1460.

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Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, April 2012.

2.78 Jin Chushi 金處士 (act. late 12th to 13th centuries), *Dushi wang* 都市王, ninth of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 107.5 cm x 47.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), late 12th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 07.1.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.

2.79 Zhang Sigong 張思恭 (act. late 12th to 13th centuries), *Amitābha Triad* 阿彌陀三尊像; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 150.5 cm x 92.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1180.
Collection of Chion-in 知恩院, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 65, fig. 58.

2.80 Detail of five-colored clouds 五色雲.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

- 2.81** *Kṣitigarbha, King Guang of Qin, King of the Chu River, King Di of Song, and the King of the Five Offices* 地藏菩薩秦廣楚江宋帝五官; ink and colors on silk; 117 cm x 61.5 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.
Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 135.

- 2.82** Lin Tinggui 林庭珪, *Flight of the Devas* 天人飛來, twenty-second of one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 124, fig. 104.

- 2.83** Kneeling bodhisattva, h. 2.40m.
Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞 (*Cave of Perfect Enlightenment*); carved and polychromed sandstone; 6.02 m x 9.55 m x 12.13 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Cave 29, Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Source: *Dazu shike diaosu quanji* 大足石刻雕塑全集, edited by Guo Xiangying 郭相穎 et al., vol. Baoding shiku 寶頂石窟, bk. 2 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1999), 46, fig. 47.

- 2.84** Detail of kneeling figure.
Perfect Enlightenment Sutra Illumination 圓覺經變相圖; ink and colors on silk; 165.5 cm x 85.5 cm; Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), late 13th to early 14th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6142.

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Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, May 2012.

- 2.85** Huayan dong 華嚴洞 (Avatamsaka Cave); carved and polychromed sandstone; 6.2 m x 10.1 m x 11.3 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127).
Huayan dong cun 華嚴洞村, Shiyang zhen 石羊鎮, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, October 2009.

- 2.86** Detail of a scene of Sudhana's pilgrimage.
Huayan dong 華嚴洞 (Avatamsaka Cave); carved and polychromed sandstone; 6.2 m x 10.1 m x 11.3 m; Northern Song (960-1127) dynasty.
Huayan dong cun 華嚴洞村, Shiyang zhen 石羊鎮, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province, China.

Source: Wang Dajun 王達軍, *Anyue shiku* 安岳石窟 (Chengdu: Sichuan meishu chubanshe, 2008), 65.

- 2.87** *Visualization Sutra* tableau 觀無量壽經變相; carved and polychromed sandstone; 8.10 m x 20.20 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Niche 18, Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, November 2009.

- 2.88** Detail of children.
Visualization Sutra tableau 觀無量壽經變相; carved and polychromed sandstone; 8.10 m x 20.20 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Niche 18, Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, November 2009.

- 2.89** Revolving sutra case 轉輪經藏; carved and polychromed sandstone; 4.05 m x 4.10 m x 6.79 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1142-1146.
Niche 136, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, November 2009.

- 2.90** Detail of children.
Revolving sutra case 轉輪經藏; carved and polychromed sandstone; 4.05 m x 4.10 m x 6.79 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1142-1146.
Niche 136, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, January 2011.

Part 3

- 3.1** *Vairocana Buddha* 毗盧遮那佛; ink and colors on silk; 147 cm x 76 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.
Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 1.

- 3.2** *Tai yi and the Myriad Spirits and the Emperors of the Five Directions* 太一諸神五方五帝.
Shuilu daochang guishen tu 水陸道場鬼神圖; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 24 cm x 15 cm, Ming dynasty (1368-1644); ca. 1465-1487.
Collection of the National Library of China 中國國家圖書館, Beijing, China.

Source: *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan er bian* 中國古代版畫叢刊二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), vol. 2, 33.

- 3.3** Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *Kṣitigarbha* 地藏, one of the eleven scrolls of *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 53.5 cm x 37 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Eigen-ji 永源寺, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 89, fig. 82.

- 3.4** Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *Kṣitigarbha* 地藏菩薩像; ink and colors on silk; 87.3 cm x 52 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Rozan-ji 廬山寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 88, fig. 81.

- 3.5** *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory*; carved sandstone; 2.0 m x 2.8 m x 0.9 m; late Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 9th century.
Niche 60, Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, October 2009.

- 3.6** Detail of the karma mirror 業鏡.

Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory; carved sandstone; 2.0 m x 2.8 m x 0.9 m; late Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 9th century.
Niche 60, Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province.

Photograph by Phillip E. Bloom, October 2009.

- 3.7** Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *King Yama* 閻羅大王, one of the eleven scrolls of *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 53.5 cm x 37 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, ca. 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Eigen-ji 永源寺, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 90, fig. 82.

- 3.8** Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *The King who Turns the Wheel of the Five Paths* 五道轉輪王, one of the eleven scrolls of *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 53.5 cm x 37.0 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, ca. 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Eigen-ji 永源寺, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 92, fig. 82.

- 3.9** Lu Zhongyuan 陸仲淵, *King Yama* 閻羅大王, one of three scrolls of the *Ten Kings* 十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 85.9 cm x 50.8 cm; Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, ca. 13th or 14th century.
Collection of the Nara National Museum 奈良国立博物館, Nara, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 93, fig. 83.

- 3.10** Studio of Jin Chushi 金處士家, *King Yama* 閻羅大王; ink and colors on silk; 111.8 x 47.6 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 12th century.
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (30.76.2930).

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 83, fig. 79.

- 3.11** Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *King Guang of Qin* 秦廣王, one of the ten scrolls of the *Ten Kings* 十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 83.2 cm x 47.0 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) dynasty, 13th century.

Collection of the Nara National Museum 奈良国立博物館, Nara, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 85, fig. 80.

- 3.12** *The Four Messengers in Charge of the Year, Month, Day, and Hour* 年月日時四直功曹使者; ink and colors on silk; 118 cm x 61.5 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 82.

- 3.13** *The State- and Populace-Protecting Gods of the City, Earth, Monastery, etc.* 護國護民城隍社廟土地殿塔伽藍等眾; ink and colors on silk; 147 cm x 76 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.

Source: *Baoning si Ming dai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985), n. p., fig. 134.

- 3.14** *Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Lower Realm* 下界持符使者; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 90 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454.

Collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 659).

Source: *La Voie du Tao: un autre chemin de l'être*, edited by Catherine Delacour (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée Guimet, 2010), 290, fig. 76.3a.

- 3.15** *Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Middle Realm* 中界持符使者; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 90 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454.

Collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 696).

Source: *La Voie du Tao: un autre chemin de l'être*, edited by Catherine Delacour (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée Guimet, 2010), 291, 76.3b.

- 3.16** *Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Buddha's Assembly* 佛會持符使者; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 90 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454.
Collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 681).

Source: *La Voie du Tao: un autre chemin de l'être*, edited by Catherine Delacour (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée Guimet, 2010), 292, 76.3c.

- 3.17** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Flight to the Feet of a King of Purgatory* 十王のもとへの飛来, fifth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.5 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 116, fig. 104.

- 3.18** Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Flight (Offering Saint of Huian [yuan])* 飛来 (慧安打供聖者), fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.6 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 115, fig. 104.

- 3.19** Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Spirit General and Ghost* 神將と鬼人, seventy-fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.6 cm x 53.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

Source: *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 115, fig. 104.

- 3.20** *Infernal Messenger* 冥使圖, one scroll from a set of *Ten Kings* 十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 92.5 cm x 44.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History 神奈川県立歴史博物館, Yokohama, Japan.

Source: *Dōkyō no bijutsu* 道教の美術 [*Taoism Art*] (Osaka: Ōsaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan, 2009), 133, fig. 162.

3.21 Diagram of the Cosmos.

Source: FZTJ, fasc. 31, 308a.

INTRODUCTION

Ghostly Mischief at Stone Wall Monastery

1210¹ seems to have been a difficult year for the villagers of Shibi xiang 石壁鄉 (Stone Wall Township) in Dazu County 大足縣, Tongchuan Prefectural Circuit 潼川府路.² The discontent spirits of the deceased beset members of the community in Shibi, cursing them and generally disrupting their lives. The Seventh Daughter of the Zhang family 張氏七娘 was particularly involved in this supernatural mischief. While alive, it seems that she had lost gold and silver objects belonging to her granddaughter 遺孫女金銀之物. Later, despite having repented and asked for the return of the objects 心悔索還, and despite having recited various spells 咒 and taken various other actions to exorcise whatever spirits were afflicting her, she was unable to regain the jewels. Ultimately, she herself died³ because of some still-unrepented sin 無懺是犯, later coming back herself to haunt the members of her community. Consequently, other villagers, led by the brothers Liang Yuanqing 梁元清 and Liang Yuanchang 梁元長—two prominent local disciples of the Buddha 佛頭首弟子, and, most likely, relatives of the deceased

¹ See Liang Yuanqing et al. 梁元清等, “Shi shuli shijie shuilu san bei 戶豎立石竭水陸三碑,” in MWL, 329-331. The transcription published in MWL includes numerous errors, most likely because of the crude calligraphy and poor state of preservation of the original inscription, the bottom ten or fifteen centimeters of which are completely effaced. The poor condition of the stele also renders interpretation of some of the content rather difficult. I am very grateful to Professor Hou Chong 侯冲 of Shanghai Normal University 上海師範大學 for providing me with a revised and punctuated transcription. A full transcription and rough translation are included in Zhou Zhao, “The Unified Three Teachings in the Rock Carvings of the Song Dynasty in Chongqing and Sichuan,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Heidelberg University, 2010, “Appendix 1,” 5-10.

² This Song-dynasty (960-1279) administrative area corresponded to parts of eastern Sichuan Province and Chongqing Municipality in contemporary China. The borders of Dazu County have remained largely the same from the Song to the present.

³ The text does not specifically say how Seventh Daughter Zhang died, but in a later section of the text, it does refer to her as “deceased Seventh Daughter Zhang 故張氏七娘.”

Seventh Daughter Zhang—, sought to undo past faults 乞解前愆 and, in essence, to restore balance to the relationship between the realms of humans and ghosts. To do this, the community

collectively donated pure funds, and carved a numinous inscribed stone stele, which [they] erected within the Hall of the Three Teachings. [They] summoned a monk to come to the cliff to open a ritual altar and to perform the Great Retreat of the Three Stele Water-Land Dharma Bestowal, reading sutras, lighting lamps, and carrying out dharma services according to proper procedure.

共捨淨財，鑄造石竭靈碑，豎在三教堂中，仗僧就岩，開建道場，修設三碑水陸法施大齋，看經然燈准儀法事。⁴

The Seventh Daughter Zhang was the primary object of this exorcistic intervention—the principal soul that the villagers prayed would “quickly arrive at that Pure Place and be reborn in the Excellent Land 速達淨方，超生勝境,” and whose traces, they begged, would be immediately removed from the registers of the demonic bookkeepers of the Netherworld 神形鬼簿，剷跡除蹤. Yet the whole community also took this occasion to come together to bring postmortem benefit to the spirits of all of their ancestors, both young and old, both recently deceased and long-since passed away.

After laying out the general background to their performance of the ritual, the authors of the stele text then go on to recount precisely which deities they invoked over the course of this Great Water-Land Retreat—specifically, the Great Awakened Beings of the Eight Heavens 八天大覺, the Jade Emperor 玉帝 and the Three Primes 三元, the Imperial Sovereign of the Eastern Peak 東嶽帝君, and the Perfected Ministers of the Three Offices 三曹真宰.⁵ They also list the mantras that they recited during the ritual—namely, the “Mantra of the Pledge of the Universal Liberation of *Dong* Ghosts Spoken by the Buddha 佛說溥解醜誓真言,” the “Mantra of Rebirth

⁴ MWL, 330.

⁵ The list of deities is incomplete due to the effacement of the bottom portion of the stele.

in the Pure Land Spoken by the Buddha 佛說往生淨土真言,” the “Mantra of Dismissing Ghosts and Spirits Spoken by the Buddha 佛說遣鬼神真言,” the “Mantra of Birth in the Halls of Heaven Spoken by the Buddha 佛說生天堂真言,” the “Mantra of Dispelling the Rancorous Ties of the Hundred Beings Spoken by the Buddha 佛說解百生冤結真言,” and the “Dhāraṇi of the Universal Repentance of Vice Spoken by the Buddha 佛說普懺臯陀羅尼”—, as well as the perceived benefits of these ostensibly Sanskrit spells.⁶ Through the recitation of these powerful incantations, the villagers sought particularly to cleanse their deceased relatives of past transgressions so that they might be sent to a higher path of rebirth. Yet they also had a more proximate goal in mind, endeavoring to ensure that “every family be forever prosperous, and every household be rid of calamity and affliction 家家顯福綿長，戶戶却除災惱,” and that “ghosts, thieves, and the flames of war be cut off, [forced] to flee to the other realm, while the water sprites and drought-causing demons be ceaselessly separated [from our realm] 鬼賊火烽，鬪奔佗界；水妖旱魃，分野無停.”⁷ By saving their ancestors and by reaffirming the division between the realms of humans and ghosts, the stability of the Shibi Township would thus be guaranteed.

Strikingly, although this ritual was performed by a Buddhist monk 僧, and although the title plaque at the head of the stele announces the text to be an “Edict of the Buddha 佛勅,” the

⁶ Intriguingly, as Zhao, 138, briefly notes, some of these spells appear verbatim in materials related to the Water-Land Retreat recovered from Yunnan Province, but not in any canonical works, thus suggesting that the Yunnan materials, discussed extensively in Chapter 1.1, preserve a tradition of ritual performance unique to Sichuan and Yunnan. See, for example, the “Fo shuo pu chan zui tuoluoni 佛說普懺臯陀羅尼” in MWL, 331, and the “Pu chan zhuizhang tuoluoni 普懺罪障陀羅尼,” in CGSL, “Diyi tan,” 41a; and the “Fo shuo jie baisheng yuanjie zhenyan 佛說解百生冤結真言” in MWL, 331, and the “Jie baisheng yuanjie tuoluoni 解百生冤結陀羅尼” in CGSL, “Diyi tan,” 41b.

⁷ MWL, 331.

deities invoked include a number of figures that stand in the upper reaches of the Daoist celestial hierarchy—notably, the Jade Emperor, the Three Primes (also known as the Three Officials 三官 of Heaven 天, Earth 地, and Water 水), and the Imperial Sovereign of the Eastern Peak. Moreover, the stele ends with language that is decidedly cosmic and at times highly inflected with the tones of Daoism and state religion, speaking, for example, of “the joining of Heaven and Earth to complete the Four Seasons 天地節而四時成” and of “the harmonization of *yin* and *yang* [to generate] the myriad things 陰陽合而萬物□.” These Buddhist worshippers—if “Buddhist” is indeed the correct word with which to describe them—were an arrestingly ecumenical bunch.⁸ Even more intriguingly, the ritual sponsors Liang Yuanqing and Liang Yuanchang, the self-described “head disciples of the Buddha 佛頭首弟子”—concluded their rite with an action that marks the end of many Daoist rituals. Notably, they tell us in the final lines of their text that “as always, with sincerity and honesty, we memorialize beneath the gate of the

⁸ Throughout this dissertation, I refer, with seemingly un-self-reflexive abandon, to Chinese “Buddhist,” “Daoist,” “Confucian,” “state,” and “vernacular” or “popular” religions as seemingly self-contained entities. While I am well aware that these religious traditions were in constant dialogue and competition since the introduction of Buddhism sometime around the first century CE, and while I am well aware that it is, consequently, perhaps improper to speak of a “purely Buddhist” worshipper, ritual practice, or vision of the cosmos in the Chinese context, the vast majority of the sources that I have examined in the course of writing this dissertation have suggested that most worshippers were very self-conscious about identifying themselves as followers of a particular religious tradition, even as they integrated elements drawn from other traditions. (Of course, this is not to say that people did not change their “religious affiliation” depending on the context within which they were worshipping; a participant in a Buddhist ritual might be “Buddhist” on the day of the ritual performance, but might refer to himself as “Daoist” when he visited a Daoist abbey the next day. Su Shi’s 蘇軾 [1037-1101] writings give brilliant testimony to the way in which a single individual might hold multiple, doctrinally circumscribed, yet equally fervent and considered, beliefs in different religious traditions.) The villagers of Shibi Township, for example, very clearly identify themselves as “Buddhists,” and yet they integrate elements into their liturgy that, to us outside observers, appear very “non-Buddhist.” While they themselves might not have recognized such a practice as incoherent or contradictory, other observers in the period undoubtedly would have—as we shall see especially in Chapter 1.3. In general, it seems that the compilers of the ritual manuals and the pictorial programmers whose vision structured the artworks that are my focus were very aware of the (theoretical) boundaries among religious traditions. Hence, throughout this dissertation, I do specifically refer to these various religious traditions as though they are separate entities, while recognizing that the solidity of those boundaries greatly depended upon the nature of the participant and the observer. Earlier scholars have proposed a number of useful models by which to attempt to characterize the interaction among China’s various religious traditions. In writing this dissertation, I have found the review of scholarship and approach to the topic in Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1-18, particularly useful.

Office of Heaven, and toss [dragon tablets] to the two Ministries of Earth and Water⁹ to dispel the origin and to seek judgment and pardon 輒將誠懇，上奏天曹門下，投向地水二司，解釋元由，乞垂判赦。” While the stele does not record the outcome of the ritual performed by these residents of Shibi Township in late 1210, their stele still survives, still reminding readers of their own obligations to their ancestors, of the ineluctable logic of the cycles of *samsāra*, and of the surprisingly syncretic tools by which karmic debts might be alleviated.

A principally soteriological logic seems to undergird the liturgy outlined here. Quite simply, the titles of the spells mentioned indicate that they all are meant to harness magical power to exorcise and ultimately bring benefit to malevolent spirits—first by freeing those spirits from their current state of existence as wandering ghosts, and then by readying them for rebirth in the Western Pure Land 西方極樂淨土 of Amitābha Buddha 阿彌陀佛, a place considered to provide the ideal conditions for the attainment of enlightenment within a single lifetime. Read within the context of the liturgy as a whole, these mantras can be imagined to constitute part of the penultimate act in a ritual that involved securing a ritual space, calling down the myriad deities and spirits of the cosmos, liberating wandering ghosts and sending them to be reborn in Buddhist paradise, and drawing an end to the proceedings by sending memorials of the proceedings to the Daoist deities of Heaven, Earth, and Water.

Importantly for historians of liturgical art, as the stele mentions, a monk was specifically summoned to a “cliff”—presumably the cliff around which the present-day halls of Shibi si have

⁹ This is a reference to the long-standing Daoist practice of tossing or “casting” written memorials to the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water. In this practice, each of three memorials would be covered with elaborate protective envelopes of silk. They would then be buried or burned on a mountain, on the ground near the ritual altar, and in a body of water, respectively. These memorials were typically accompanied by a small figure of a dragon meant to convey the memorial to the appropriate official. In some cases, the memorial itself was decorated with a dragon. See especially Edouard Chavannes, “Le jet des dragons,” *Mémoires concernant l’Asie Orientale* 3 (1919): 53-220; see also the introduction to the subject in Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 231-239, esp. 234-239.

been constructed (Figure 0.1). Into this cliff have been carved three niches of sculptural reliefs (Figure 0.2). Of these, two are stylistically contemporaneous to the stele, suggesting that the images were carved in conjunction with the performance of the ritual in 1210. One of these niches contains an image of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni at center, with the Great Lord Lao 太上老君 (that is, the deified Laozi 老子, the mythical founder of Daoism) at proper right and a rather more ambiguous figure at proper left, most likely Confucius 孔子, the founder of the third of China's "Three Teachings 三教" (Figure 0.3).¹⁰ To their proper left sits the Jade Emperor, a slightly lower-ranking deity in the Daoist pantheon, who was widely worshipped at all levels of society during the Song dynasty as a figure linking the pantheons of Daoism and local, vernacular traditions. The other contemporaneous niche contains a relief carved more in the manner of a "transformation tableau 變相," combining iconic depictions of principal deities with narrative representations of scenes related to those main icons (0.4).¹¹ Now in quite poor condition and largely obscured by independent stone icons unearthed around the temple, the proper-right-hand side of the Shibi si tableau seems to depict an ascent to Heaven (Figure 0.5), perhaps in the wake of exorcistic ritual practice, exemplified by a figure flying through mid-air with his sword (Figure 0.6); this is followed at proper-left by a descent into the courts of two of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王, bureaucratic deities who judge deceased souls according to

¹⁰ Some scholars have identified this final figure as the Heavenly Venerable of Primordial Beginning 元始天尊, who, like the Great Lord Lao, is one of the Three Purities 三清, the loftiest deities in the Daoist celestial bureaucracy. See, for example, MWL, 314. Given that the stele refers to the ritual's having been performed in a "Hall of the Three Teachings," I am inclined to agree with Li Fangyin 黎方銀, "Dazu Songdai shiku zhong de shuilu yiji 大足宋代石窟中的水陸遺跡," reprinted in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji 3* 大足石刻研究文集 3 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2002), 101, and Zhao, 134, in identifying this figure as Confucius.

¹¹ The scholarship on transformation tableaux is extensive. For an insightful introduction to the subject, including references to recent scholarship, see Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), xiii-xxiv.

their past deeds to determine their future path of rebirth (Figure 0.7 and 0.8).¹² Worshipped by Daoists and Buddhists alike from the late Tang dynasty (618-907) onward, they are here shown examining ledgers on their desks while their demonic lackeys rend the entrails from a condemned soul (Figure 0.9). The content of the tableaux, which focus on the postmortem fate of the deceased, thus resonates well with the liturgical program laid out in the Shibi si stele. Small sculptural icons, carved fully in the round from the sandstone so abundant in Dazu County, fill the altar tables that surround these cliff carvings.

Concerns Both Mundane and Elite, Unruly and Ordered

The liturgical text of the Shibi si stele, rendered in lithic form as though to symbolically continue carrying out the liturgy that it records,¹³ and the relief carvings that accompanied it take us to the heart of the spiritual—and to the related worldly, even banal—concerns of peasants and elite alike in late-Song-dynasty (960-1279) China.¹⁴ Ghosts—which, through proper funerary

¹² For an excellent overview of the origins of the worship of the Ten Kings of Purgatory, see Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994). For an art historical study of Song-dynasty depictions of the kings, and the highly modular character both of the production of images of them and of the conception of purgatory itself, see Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 163-186. These issues are addressed in greater detail in Part 3 of this dissertation.

¹³ This notion of the possibility of the virtual performance of ritual texts—particularly oral texts, such as mantras, whose power is auditory, not semantic—inscribed in stone is discussed in Youn-mi Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos: The Chaoyang North Pagoda (1043-1044),” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2010. The case that Kim examines—namely, the upper relic crypt of the Chaoyang North Pagoda 朝陽北塔 in Liao-controlled (916-1125) northern China, which dates to 1043—involves the inscription of mantras and a mandala, all of which, Kim argues, are based on a Liao variant of the “Ritual for Chanting the Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī,” best preserved in late-Heian period (794-1185) sources as the Nyohō Sonshō 如法尊勝 Ritual. The Shibi Monastery stele, on the other hand, records a much more complete liturgy, as well as a lengthy explanation of why this liturgy was performed. While sharing in the logic of the symbolic, or virtual, ritual underlying Kim’s case study, the Shibi Monastery stele makes that logic much more explicit, I believe.

¹⁴ The study of Song religion is a field that has seen rapid expansion in the past twenty years. For particularly compelling works that deal with the spiritual and related worldly concerns of worshippers at the time, see especially Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); *Religion and Society in T'ang and Sung China*, edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993); Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Richard von Glahn, *The*

procedure, would normally be sent to the courts of the Kings of Purgatory, far distant from the human world, to be judged before rebirth—appeared with ever increasing frequency in the lives of members of all levels of Song society. As is attested by the thousands of “tales of the strange 志怪” included in works like the *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (*Record of the Listener*), the 420-fascicle collection of fantastic tales compiled by the late-Song scholar-official Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202) between 1143 and 1200, as well as in texts as diverse as local gazetteers 地方志 and stele records 碑記, both peasants and high-ranking scholar-officials alike found themselves hounded by spirits. Consequently, to govern those spirits, these mundane humans were forced to rely on supernatural ritual technologies controlled by the masters of various religious traditions¹⁵; the officials themselves, as we shall see throughout this dissertation, became liturgical innovators, as well, crafting or reshaping rituals to meet their specific needs, both this-worldly and other-. Despite having lived in a remote mountaintop village in a rather removed corner of southwestern China, the Seventh Daughter Zhang—who was both menaced by the supramundane during her lifetime and who became a supramundane menace herself after death—is an ideal figure for her age, one who transgressed ontological boundaries and who ultimately was appeased through an ephemeral ritual performance rendered eternal through the medium of the stone stele. Exorcism, as Edward Davis and others have so cogently argued, was a driving concern in the lives of all in

Sinister Way; and Matsumoto Kōichi 松本浩一, *Sōdai no Dōkyō to minkan shinkō* 宋代の道教と民間信仰 (Tokyo: Kyuko-shoin, 2006). An excellent overview of the state of the field of Japanese scholarship on Song religion may be found in Matsumoto Kōichi 松本浩一, “Bukkyō Dōkyō shi kenkyū 仏教道教史研究,” in *Nihon Sōshi kenkyū no genjō to kadai: 1980 nendai ikō wo chūshin ni* 日本宋史研究の現状と課題: 1980 年代以降を中心に, edited by Endō Takatoshi 遠藤隆俊 et al. (Tokyo: Kyuko-shoin, 2010), 213-236.

¹⁵ See for example, Judith Magee Boltz, “Not by the Seal of Office Alone: New Weapons in Battles with the Supernatural,” in *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China*, 209-240; Hsien-huei Liao, “Popular Religion and the Religious Beliefs of the Song Elite, 960-1276,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2001; and idem, “Visualizing the Afterlife: The Song Elite’s Obsession with Death, the Underworld, and Salvation,” *Chinese Studies* 漢學研究 20, no. 1 (2009), 399-440.

the period. Thus, the question of how to properly separate the spheres of ghosts and humans at a time when those spheres seem to have overlapped to a greater degree than ever before became an issue of intense interest to laity and clerics alike.

Part and parcel of this general period trend, deities, regardless of sectarian affiliation, were increasingly called down together into ritual spaces to be arrayed in ever-expanding, ever-more syncretic pantheons of the type recorded and sculpted at Shibi si. Certain spirits were thus welcome to irrupt into the human world, so long as that irruption was properly controlled by ritualists; further, spirits of various religious traditions were, at least nominally, welcome to commingle, as the Shibi si stele and carvings so clearly attest. Nevertheless, the implications of such blatantly syncretic practices for conceptions of ritual propriety more generally so disturbed certain members of society that in 1106, Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135; r. 1100-1126) decreed that icons of the Three Purities 三清, the highest divinities in the Daoist pantheon (of whom the Great Lord Lao, depicted at Shibi si, is one), must no longer be included in performances of syncretic “Buddhist” rituals such as the “Great Retreat of the Three Stele Water-Land Dharma Bestowal,” more commonly known as the “Water-Land Retreat 水陸齋,” the grandest of all Chinese Buddhist rituals in the Song and after.¹⁶ This, he said, was tantamount to viewing these lofty deities as no more than ghosts and spirits.¹⁷ If ritual was to be conducted,

¹⁶ FZTJ, fasc. 46, 419a. This decree is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation.

¹⁷ On similar grounds, Huizong also decried the apparently long-standing practice of installing images of the founders of the Three Teachings (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism) together in Buddhist image halls. In particular, he objected to placing an image of the Buddha in the center of a hall with an image of Laozi to the left and Confucius to the right. In Dazu County, such groupings can be seen at the Foer yan 佛兒岩 (Buddha Cliff), dated to 1139; Foan qiao 佛安橋 (Bridge of the Buddha’s Peace), dated to 1144; and Miaogao shan 妙高山 (Marvelously Lofty Mountain), dated to 1144. A similar array can also be seen at Dazu’s Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), dated to 1082 to 1096, although there, each founder is given a full niche to accommodate himself and his sculpted followers. Nevertheless, the Buddhist niche is placed in between the Daoist and Confucian niches. This site is discussed in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation. Photographs of these sites are largely unpublished; see instead the brief descriptions of these sites in MWL, 319, 321-323, 324, and 316-318. See also the discussions throughout Zhao, “The Unified Three Teachings,” which includes photographs of some of the sites.

and if images were to be employed, the boundaries not only among different classes of spirits but also among the spirits of different religions were to be strictly respected in text, image, and performance. In other words, the irrational was to be rationalized to the greatest degree possible. And images were to play an essential role in this process.

The Shibi si stele, and the surrounding narrativized tableaux, points us to another way in which an intense interest in the rational or the ordered seems to have emerged in response to the irrational irruption of the supramundane during the period. The officiants mention that they concluded their ritual by submitting written memorials “beneath the Gate of Heaven” and to the Offices of Earth and Water. The ritualists, in other words, took recourse to the primary medium of bureaucratic communication—the written document. Furthermore, on the desks of the two Kings of Purgatory, long documents (presumably the registers of the benevolent acts and past transgressions of the deceased, which are also mentioned in the stele text) are clearly visible, as are inkstones—requisite paraphernalia for any pre-modern official. Not only are one’s deeds recorded with perfect precision in the supramundane equivalent of a court register, but also bureaucratic documents of types normally passed between this-worldly officials and the emperor—that is, memorials and edicts—now must be submitted to an increasingly bureaucratized pantheon by the ritualists. The practice and more general imagination of this self-proclaimed Buddhist ritual haven, then, been subordinated to a bureaucratic idiom, an idiom intimately familiar to this-worldly officials, as well as to Daoist practitioners.¹⁸

Certainly, the Song has been long celebrated as the era that saw the triumph of a largely meritocratic governmental bureaucracy thanks to the implementation of an empire-wide exam system that, at least in theory, allowed all members of society equal access to a career in

¹⁸ For my working definition of “bureaucracy” in the context of Chinese religion, see the opening sections of Part 3 of this dissertation.

officialdom.¹⁹ While the number of exam takers far outpaced the number of open positions in that bureaucracy by the Southern Song, leading to the restructuring of Chinese society around non-government-affiliated local elites, those members of the upper echelons of society were, in a sense, formed in the image of that bureaucracy in which they ultimately had no opportunity to directly participate.²⁰ Huge numbers of bureaucratic documents, including documents composed for state- and locally sponsored rituals of all sectarian traditions, survive in the collected writings of elites from the period, serving as testaments to the ways in which bureaucracy governed all aspects of life, both secular and religious. Life was meant to be recorded in as rational and empirical a way as possible. As Hong Mai's collection of tales attest, even the supernatural was subordinated to this empirical impulse: almost all of the stories of fantastic phenomena that he compiled include the name of the person who experienced the event, the month and year that it took place, the location where it occurred, and the name of the person who recounted the tale to the compiler. These "tales of the strange" thus become evidentiary accounts meant to be read as verifiable historical records; they are manifestly not the moralizing fabrications of ritualists or sectarian partisans with an audience to convert.²¹

¹⁹ The body of scholarship on the exam system in the Song is voluminous; for a useful overview, see especially John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History* (1985; reprint, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

²⁰ While the precise contours of this societal shift have been the subject of constant reconsideration over the past three decades, the general conception laid out in Robert M. Hartwell, "Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42, no. 2 (December 1982): 365-442, and Robert P. Hymes, *Statesmen and Gentlemen: The Elite of Fu-chou, Chiang-hsi, in Northern and Southern Sung* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986) set the terms for the debate.

²¹ For the most complete English-language introduction to the text, its author, and the history of its compilation, see Alister D. Inglis, *Hong Mai's Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006). On the historical value and reliability of the *Yijian zhi*, see Hansen, 18-21, and Edward L. Davis, 16-20.

The Paradox of the Visual Culture of Song Buddhism

Given the general historical scenario sketched in such broad strokes above, I would argue that the decidedly humble carvings and stele at the remote site of Shibi si exemplify an understudied paradox that lies at the heart of Song-dynasty Buddhist ritual practice and its visual culture. On the one hand, the Buddhist pantheon became increasingly expansive; it was given visual form in ever more material, bureaucratic ways, and it was controlled through bureaucratic ritual means that themselves seemed to mirror the practices of Daoist ritualists and of the bureaucracy governing the Song state itself. On the other hand, the boundary separating that supramundane realm from the human world became decidedly more permeable, as ghosts and deities became an omnipresent part of daily life, routinely represented in text and in image. How to treat these two contradictory phenomena—one pointing to rational orderliness, the other pointing to unpredictable unruliness—posed a distinct problem for the visual artists in the period tasked with creating works that not only might function in ritual but also might depict, argue for, or comment on those same practices. While Hong Mai might have been able to marry the empirical and the supramundane by taking quick recourse to an evidentiary mode of story recording, creators of liturgical artworks found themselves confronted with the more vexing task of responding to multi-sensorial ritual environments into which every greater numbers of gods and ghosts were summoned and in which bureaucratic means of dealing with these spirits took on an importance never seen before.

Despite their rather poor state of preservation, the carvings at Shibi si make use of several of the motifs and strategies of visual representation that emerged in response to the difficult paradox that Song artisans faced. Notably, albeit barely visibly, wisps of clouds seem to surround several of the icons here, perhaps suggesting the descent of the deities to irrupt into the

space of worship (Figure 0.10). The cloud, rendered periodically in stone but most commonly in painting—which itself seems to have become the medium of choice for liturgical artworks crafted for use in rituals with ever-larger pantheons—became a ubiquitous motif in religious artworks of the Song and after; indeed, one is hard-pressed to find a liturgical work from this period that does not, in some way, incorporate a cloud. Meanwhile, the bureaucratic idiom necessary for representing and communicating with increasingly large pantheons of deities is perhaps best exemplified in the depictions of the Ten Kings of Purgatory, each deity and his entourage systematically arrayed one after the other in almost modular fashion; as we have already seen, bureaucratic paraphernalia, such as documents, brushes, and inkstones, were to become essential iconographic attributes of these newly bureaucratized deities, and their newly bureaucratized ritualist-suppliants, as well. One must wonder, then, how these paradoxical phenomena and the visual motifs that speak so vividly to them took on such importance for self-identified Buddhist worshippers and artisans at the time. Despite its humbleness, *Shibi si* thus points to a number of pressing issues regarding the visual culture of Song religion that have yet to be explored.

Visual Culture of the Water-Land Retreat

I contend that a resolution to this paradox can be achieved through close analysis of a diverse group of paintings, cliff carvings, ritual manuals, ghost stories, and miscellaneous writings 筆記 by scholar-officials from all regions of the Song empire, as well as from the neighboring Jurchen Jin (1115-1234) and Korean Goryeo (918-1392) kingdoms. The *Shibi si* stele points us to the all-important thread that ties together the heterogeneous materials that will serve as the primary sources for this dissertation. Specifically it directs us to the Water-Land Retreat, the ostensibly Buddhist ritual, briefly outlined in the stele itself, by which the villagers

sought to save their ancestors, rebalance the relationship between humans and ghosts, and ensure the stability of their connections to the cosmos more generally. In fact, Shibi si is one of five liturgically linked Song sites in Dazu County, now part of contemporary Chongqing Municipality, the richest repository of *in situ* Five Dynasties (907-960) and Song sculpture in China, that provide the earliest extant material evidence for the practice of this ritual. These sculptural ensembles include Niche 253 at Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain) (dated 1001), an icon of an arhat 羅漢 excavated at Dazhong si 大鐘寺 (Great Bell Monastery) (dated 1063), the thirteen niches at Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain) (1082-1096), the four niches at Miaogao shan 妙高山 (Marvelously Lofty Mountain) (ca. 1145), and, as discussed above, the tableaux and stele of Shibi si (1210). These five diverse sites, all far smaller than Dazu's more famous twelfth- and thirteenth-century rupestrian complex at Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain),²² all bear inscriptions mentioning the Water-Land Retreat,²³ the grandest, and perhaps most important, Buddhist ritual performed in China in the Song, and even into the present. This ritual—which involves summoning all beings in the cosmos to a ritual site, where they are universally cleansed and fêted—was first performed in the late Tang dynasty but did not take full form until the Song.²⁴ Throughout this dissertation, I will argue that many of the

²² The scholarship in Chinese on Baoding shan is voluminous. Three major English-language studies are available: Angela Howard, *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China* (Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2001); Karil Kucera, "Cliff Notes: Text and Image at Baodingshan," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 2002; and Wang Yudong, "*Figures en buste* in Medieval China: Three Studies," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007, 218-316.

²³ These five sites were first identified in Li Fangyin, 93-102.

²⁴ For the best introduction to the ritual in any language, see Daniel B. Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land," in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). Parts of Stevenson's essay rely heavily on Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, "Suiriku-e seikō 水陸会小考," *Tōhō shūkyō* 東方宗教 12 (1957), reprinted in Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, *Chūgoku bukkyō-shi kenkyū* 中国仏教史研究 (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1984), vol. 2, 213-235, the first major scholarly study of the ritual. Michel Strickmann also has

changes that occurred in Buddhist visual culture during the Song dynasty—from the bureaucratic expansion of the pantheons depicted to a burgeoning interest in depicting figures transcending the cloudy boundaries between the worlds of spirits and humans, and between the spheres of the real and the representational—can be understood only in relation to the transformations in religious practice and imagination embodied in the Water-Land Retreat. Simply put, I argue that the liturgies and artworks of the Water-Land Retreat provide an ideal case study through which to examine the visual culture and ritual practice of popular forms of Song Buddhism in general.

The references to the ritual in the inscriptions in Dazu County are, admittedly, rather cursory, except in the case of the stele at Shibi si introduced above. For example, Niche 253 of the Fo wan 佛灣 (Buddha's Cove) of Bei shan, located just north of the county seat, is inscribed with the following text on the proper-left-hand side of its façade:

Chen Shaoxun, a disciple [of the Buddha], administrator of military affairs and former magistrate of the counties of Changyuan, Yongchuan, and Dazu, together with his wife n   Huang, in the fifth year of the Chunhua era [994], during a time of uprisings, adorned and painted this niche for merit, praying for their family to remain in peace and to have eternal blessings. On the eighth day of the second month of the fourth year of the Xianping reign era [1001], we held a Water-Land Retreat in expression of celebration, which we solemnly record.²⁵

published extensive reflections on the liturgy in Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins: le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 369-411. In Chinese, the standard, though now outdated, reference is Zhou Shujia 周叔迦, *Fayuan tancong* 法苑談叢, reprinted in *Zhou Shujia foxue lunzhu quanji* 周叔迦佛學論著全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), vol. 3, 1030-1031. For a more recent account of the ritual, see Hong Jinchun 洪錦淳, *Shuilu fahui yigui* 水陸法會儀軌 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2006). A thorough description of the liturgy has been published in German in Petra Klose, "Der *Shuilu* Ritus and seine Bilder," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Heidelberg University, 1992. For an important description of contemporary performances of the ritual, see Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, *Chūgoku no bukyō girei* 中国の仏教儀礼 (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1986), 123-164.

²⁵ Translation adapted from Thomas Suchan, "The Eternally Flourishing Stronghold: An Iconographic Study of the Buddhist Sculpture of the Fowan and Related Sites at Beishan, Dazu, ca. 892-1155," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2003, 850.

□□弟子都知兵馬使，前知昌元 | 永川大足縣事陳紹珣，與室家黃 | 氏，為淳化五年草亂之時，愿獲眷 | 尚平善常值△聖明，妝繪此龕功 | 德云，咸平四年二月八日修水陸齋表 | 慶。謹記。²⁶

The base of a free-standing sculpture of an arhat excavated at Dazhong si at the eastern edge of the county in 1986,²⁷ meanwhile, includes the following inscription:

The [Buddhist] disciples of Shuangxi Township Chen Bing, *jinshi* Chen Gong, Chen Zhang, and Chen Yu, upon the awakening of their minds, each donated money to carve six sculptures of arhats to seek to preserve the peace and happiness of their father, □□ long, small □□. On the □ day of the eleventh month of the eighth year of the Jiayou era [1063], we together held a Water-Land Retreat in expression of celebration. Funds raised by the monk Hengpu.²⁸

雙腊鄉弟子陳炳、 | 进士陳珙、陳漳、陳 | 俞遂启意，各舍 | 錢鐫作第 [□?] | 羅漢六尊，乞保 | 堂上父安樂，□ | □長小□□，以嘉佑八年十一月□ | 日同修水陸齋 | 表慶。僧淳朴化。²⁹

At Shizhuan shan, located near the southwestern boundary of the county, are two inscriptions—one accompanying a niche depicting Confucius and his ten disciples and one accompanying a niche depicting the cosmic buddha Vairocana 毗盧遮那, the historical buddha Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼, and the future buddha Maitreya 彌勒—mentioning the performance of a single Water-Land Retreat in 1088. The inscription on the niche of Confucius and his ten disciples recounts:

On the seventh day of the first month of winter [i.e., the tenth month] in the *wuchen* year of the Yuanyou era [1088], we held a Water-Land Assembly in celebration.

²⁶ MWL, 72-73. Throughout this dissertation, □ indicates missing characters in an inscription, △ indicates spaces intentionally left blank by the carvers, and | indicates line breaks.

²⁷ An account of the excavation of this site is given in Deng Zhijin 鄧之金, “Dazu xian Dazhong si Songdai yuandiao shike yizhi diaocha 大足縣大鐘寺宋代圓雕石刻遺址調查,” in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji* 大足石刻研究文集 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1993), 105-113.

²⁸ This monk is mentioned in multiple inscriptions on sculptures from Dazhong si dating to the 1060s and seems to have been a prominent monk who proselytized extensively in the local area. Several inscriptions refer to him as “superintendent monk 住持僧,” while another refers to him as “superintendent and abbot 住持院主.” See MWL, 473-475.

²⁹ MWL, 473.

The [Buddhist] disciple Yan Xun, who has resolved to attain enlightenment and has made these carvings in offering, prays for intelligence and wisdom in rebirth after rebirth.

[Recorded by] the layman Wen Weijian of Yueyang [contemporary Anyue County 安岳縣].

元佑戊辰歲孟冬七日，設水陸會慶贊訖。 | 發心鑄造供養弟子嚴遜愿， |
世世生生聰明多智。 | 岳陽處士文惟簡。³⁰

The inscription on the niche of the Three Buddhas similarly records:

On the seventh day of the tenth month of the *wuchen* year [1088], we held a Water-Land Retreat in celebration.

戊辰年十月七日，修水陸齋慶贊訖。³¹

Finally, above the head of an arhat depicted at Miaogao shan, located at the western edge of Dazu County, is inscribed a poem from the famed scholar-official Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037-1101) set of sixteen "Shuilu faxiang zan 水陸法像贊" ("Encomia for the Dharma Images of the Water-Land [Retreat]").³² The inscribed poem is the sixth of the sixteen in the set and, not surprisingly, is intended in praise of arhats. It reads:³³

So large that one cannot know [their extent],

³⁰ MWL, 317.

³¹ MWL, 317. A second inscription is carved at the niche of the Three Buddhas. It tells us that the niche was

carved by Wen Weijian of Yueyang, and his sons Wen Juzheng, Juyong, and Juli. Recorded on the third day of the eighth month of the *renxu* year [1082].

岳陽文惟簡鑄，男文居政、居用、居禮。 | 歲次壬戌八月三日記。

In other words, the carving of this particular niche was completed more than six years before the performance of the ritual, which may have been intended to celebrate the completion of the Confucian niche. That the sponsors of the ritual chose to record its performance twice, and further, that they chose to record its performance on the earlier niche of the Three Buddhas, likely indicates the importance of this niche both to the site as a whole and to the performance of the ritual.

³² On these encomia, see Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 145-149.

³³ The inscription is recorded in MWL, 329. As the following footnotes show, several characters in the inscribed text differ from the version passed down in textual sources, such as SSWJ, vol. 2, 631-635, and SSTL, 115a-116a.

mountains move following [their] threads.
So small that they [can] enter Avīci,
they wash their bodies with a *kuṇḍikā*.
Even though I am incapable,
I am capable of making this offering,
And know that all people
possess this marvelous function.

大不可知	山隨綫移
小人無間	澡身君 ³⁴ 持
我雖不能	能設此供
知一切人 ³⁵	具此妙 ³⁶ 用

What we can glean from these inscriptions is something quite simple—namely, that throughout the Song dynasty, a Buddhist ritual known as the Water-Land Retreat was frequently performed by self-identified Buddhist worshippers as part of the activities celebrating the completion of various sculptural images in Dazu County. In fact, if we were to survey all of the inscriptions found in Dazu, we would find that the Water-Land Retreat was by far the most commonly performed, specifically *named* ritual performed there during the Song; it is, actually, one of only two specifically named rituals to be found among the inscriptions. The *Dazu shike mingwen lu* 大足石刻銘文錄 (*Record of Inscriptions of the Stone Carvings of Dazu*), completed in 1999, records 1009 inscriptions—including dedicatory inscriptions on sculptures, commemorative stele texts, and poems composed by visitors to sites—found throughout the county and dating from the Tang through the Qing (1644-1911) dynasties. Of these, approximately forty-five refer to the performance of ritual activities upon the completion of the carving of an image. The majority of these forty-five inscriptions simply state that the donors

³⁴ SSWJ, vol. 2, 633, and SSTL, 115c: 軍.

³⁵ SSWJ, vol. 2, 633, and SSTL, 115c: 法.

³⁶ SSTL, 115c: 妙.

“held a retreat in expression of celebration 修 [or 設] 齋表慶”; in other words, a vegetarian feast was held for the monks who consecrated the image, during the course of which simple rites of repentance were probably performed, vows were made, and prayers were offered.³⁷

Four specific types (though not *names*) of ritual activity are also mentioned in these inscriptions: two different funerary retreats—commemorations of the “final seventh day 終七日 [i.e., the forty-ninth day]”³⁸ and the “hundredth day 百日” anniversaries of a death³⁹ in the typical medieval Chinese Buddhist cycle of ten mortuary observances⁴⁰; a “Banner Raising Retreat 掛幡齋”⁴¹; and the recitation of sutras 看經 (mentioned four times).⁴² The two specifically named ritual practices are the Water-Land Retreat, mentioned by name in the five inscriptions cited above, and the “Wondrous Retreat of Perfect Penetration 圓通妙齋,”⁴³ a retreat whose grand descriptor may be read simply as an adjective praising its incredible efficacy,⁴⁴ as

³⁷ There is extensive literature on the performance of vegetarian feasts and the performance of simple repentance rites during them, especially in the area around Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, where numerous paper fragments preserving the vows and prayers of local people were recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17. See especially Wang Chuan 汪娟, *Dunhuang lichenwen yanjiu* 敦煌禮懺文研究 (Taipei: Fagu wenhua shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1998), and idem, *Tang Song guyi fojiao chanyi yanjiu* 唐宋古逸佛教懺儀研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2008).

³⁸ See Niche 53, dated 915, at Bei shan, Fo wan, in MWL, 17.

³⁹ See Niche 54, undated but probably late Tang, at Bei shan, Fo wan, in MWL, 16.

⁴⁰ On this system of funerary rituals, see Teiser, *The Sutra on the Ten Kings*.

⁴¹ Presumably, this refers to the fact that banners, perhaps like those found in Mogao Cave 17 at Dunhuang were paraded during the ritual. See Niche 279, niche dated 955, ritual dated 1001, at Bei shan, Fo wan, in MWL, 21.

⁴² See Niche 15, dated 896, at Bei shan, Yingpan po 營盤坡, in MWL, 16; two inscriptions at Niche 168, dated 1121-1122, at Bei shan, Fo wan, in MWL, 26 and 74; Niche 7, dated 1150, inside the Duobao ta 多寶塔 at Bei shan, in MWL, 445.

⁴³ See Niche 136 at Bei shan, Fo wan, in MWL, 31.

⁴⁴ Suchan, 836, interprets the descriptor in this way.

the title of a specific repentance practice known only through non-canonical sources,⁴⁵ or as a possible alternate title for the Water-Land Retreat itself.⁴⁶ That the Water-Land Retreat is referred to by name in five inscriptions, and that it is one of only two rituals specifically named in any inscription at Dazu, unequivocally indicates its importance and prestige in the eyes of local worshippers.⁴⁷ Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* further confirms this suspicion about the paramount importance of the Water-Land Retreat to worshippers throughout the empire, including a total of twenty-four stories that mention performances of the ritual—a total that, as far as I have been able to determine, exceeds that of any other named ritual.⁴⁸ Nearly one hundred texts in the

⁴⁵ The ritual seems to have been codified by the mid Northern Song, at approximately the same time as Yang E 楊諤 (1032-1098) first codified the Water-Land Retreat (see Chapter 1.3), although the earliest surviving copies of ritual manuals related to the rite date only to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The rite focuses on repentance by means of the invocation of Guanyin's salvific powers—and indeed, Hou Chong has argued that it was colloquially called the “Guanyin daochang 觀音道場” (“Guanyin Ritual”)—and generally was performed over the course of three days. Intriguingly, it relies heavily on Śikṣānanda's 實叉難陀 (act. late seventh to early eighth century) translation of the *Fo shuo jiu mianran egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救面然餓鬼陀羅尼經 (in T21, no. 1314), a sutra commonly claimed as a scriptural source for the Water-Land Retreat. Liturgies for the Retreat of Perfect Penetration found in Yunnan Province are discussed in Hou Chong 侯冲, *Yunnan Azhali jiao jingdian yanjiu* 雲南阿吒力教經典研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 2008), 93-98. Ming-dynasty printed liturgies for the Guanyin Ritual found near Maiji shan 麥積山, which Hou Chong claims to be variants of the liturgy for the Retreat of Perfect Penetration are discussed in idem, “Lun Dazu Baoding wei fojiao shuilu daochang 論大足寶頂為佛教水陸道場,” in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji* 5 大足石刻研究文集 5 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2005), 192-213; Wei Wenwu 魏文斌 and Li Xiaohong 李曉紅, “Maiji shan Ming dai xieben ‘Baoen yike’ chubu yanjiu 麥積山明代寫本‘報恩儀科’初步研究,” in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji* 5 大足石刻研究文集 5 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2005), 390-400; idem, “Maiji shan Ming dai xieben ‘Baoen daochang yi’ ji xiangguan wenti yanjiu 麥積山明代寫本‘報恩道場儀’及相關問題研究,” *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 世界宗教研究 3 (2005): 43-52; and Li Xiaohong 李曉紅, “Maiji shan wenshu gaishu ji ji jian zhongyao wenshu jieshao 麥積山文書概述及幾件重要文書介紹,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 6 (2003): 79-87. Hou, *Yunnan Azhali jiao*, 323-328, includes a description of several contemporary performances of the rite.

⁴⁶ Personal communication with Hou Chong, e-mail, March 2012.

⁴⁷ Inscriptions referring to the Water-Land Retreat are also to be found in nearby Anyue County and at Laitan 涑灘, Hechuan District 合川區, both in Chongqing Municipality. These inscriptions are briefly discussed in Zhao, 47-51, esp. 49-50. A translation of the Water-Land inscription in Anyue may also be found in Henrik H. Sørensen, *The Buddhist Sculptures at Yuanjuedong in Anyue: The History and Art of a Buddhist Sanctuary in Central Sichuan Province*, SBS Monographs, vol. 5 (Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1999), 86. I sincerely thank Prof. John Rosenfield for giving me his copy of this publication.

⁴⁸ See “Shen gao fang 神告方” in YJZ, *jia zhi* 甲志, fasc. 2, vol. 1, 17; “Gui hu xueshi 鬼呼學士,” in YJZ, *jia zhi* 甲志, fasc. 10, vol. 1, 87; “Bajiao shang gui 芭蕉上鬼,” in YJZ, *jia zhi* 甲志, fasc. 14, vol. 1, 120; “Yang Jing chang

Quan Song wen 全宋文 (*Complete Prose of the Song*) mention the Water-Land Retreat (or monastic halls for the performance of the ritual, typically called “Water-Land Halls 水陸堂”) in their titles, and several hundred more discuss the ritual in their textual main body. The mass of material only increases when we turn our attention to later periods.

Past Scholarship

Unequivocally and quantifiably, then, the Water-Land Retreat occupied a preeminent place in the imagination of Song-dynasty worshippers, though the questions of how that came to be and of how the ritual was actually performed at the time remain to be fully explored. Certainly, recognition of the general importance of the Water-Land Retreat in mid- to late-imperial China is nothing new to historians of religion. J. J. M. de Groot, while not dealing with the Water-Land Retreat *per se*, analyzed similar such syncretic mortuary rituals as performed in southeastern China in the late nineteenth century,⁴⁹ while Johannes Prip-Møller briefly described contemporary performances of the Water-Land Retreat and the ways in which monastery halls were configured for its performance in his 1937 work on Chinese monasteries.⁵⁰ Makita Tairyō inaugurated the scholarly, historically informed study of the ritual during the 1950s, describing the most common variant of the ritual while attempting to dissociate fact from fiction in the mytho-history that is recited during the ritual’s every performance.⁵¹ Writing during the same decade, Yoshioka Yoshitoyo discussed parallels between the Water-Land Retreat and Daoist

yuan 楊靖償冤,” in YJZ, *jia zhi* 甲志, fasc. 18, vol. 1, 156; “Xu dai zhi 余待制,” in YJZ, *jia zhi* 甲志, fasc. 18, vol. 1, 162; etc.

⁴⁹ See, for example, J. J. M. de Groot, “Buddhist Masses for the Dead at Amoy,” in *Actes du sixième Congrès international des orientalistes, tenu en 1883 à Leide* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1883), vol. 4, sect. 3, 1-120.

⁵⁰ Johannes Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries: Their Plan and Its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life* (1937; 2nd edition, Hong Kong, Hong Kong University Press, 1967), 265-268.

⁵¹ Makita, “Suiriku-e seikō,” 213-235.

rituals of post-mortem salvation; more importantly, he also introduced a fifteenth-century manual—which apparently survived only in his personal collection but which seems to accord closely with texts that have subsequently come to light—that records an important alternate tradition of performing the Water-Land Retreat.⁵² More recently, Daniel Stevenson has written a concise, brilliant account of the ritual in its late-imperial forms. He discusses the contemporary method of its performance, reflects on the vision of the cosmos embodied within it, and considers its amalgamation of various extra-textual rites and practices. Further, he speculates on the history of its formation and on the possible existence of various regional variants, and, of greatest importance to art historians, he questions functionalist accounts of paintings ostensibly crafted for the ritual. To date, Stevenson’s essay remains the most sophisticated treatment of the ritual’s practice and history.

Over the course of the past ten years, however, a number of important materials—both textual and visual—have been uncovered by scholars in China, making the time ripe to revisit Stevenson’s arguments. These new materials confirm many of his speculations, while nuancing others. Most notably, Hou Chong 侯冲, a historian of Buddhist ritual who formerly worked for the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences 雲南省社會科學院 in Kunming 昆明, has described contemporary performances of a variant of the Water-Land Retreat now practiced solely in Yunnan; further, he has collected a number of manuals for the performance of this variant, including a hitherto ignored fourteenth-century woodblock-printed edition in the Yunnan Provincial Library 雲南省圖書館.⁵³ He has argued that this manual likely preserves something

⁵² Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豊, “Chūgoku ni okeru Mikkyō shinkō 中国における密教信仰,” in idem, *Dōkyō to Bukkyō 道教と仏教* (Tokyo: Nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai, 1959), vol. 1, 369-411, esp. 406-408 and 424.

⁵³ See especially Hou Chong, “Lun Dazu Baoding,” 192-213; idem, “Zai lun Dazu Baoding,” 296-312; idem, *Yunnan Azhali jiao*, 69-85, 338-341, and 346-348; and idem, “Shizhuan shan shike: diao zai shitou shang de shuilu

close to a long-lost Southern Song (1127-1279) variant of the rite penned by the monk Zujue 祖覺 (1087-1150) and practiced in Sichuan. Too, he has edited and published a number of important manuscripts from Dunhuang and Yunnan dating to the ninth and tenth centuries that may well record prototypical forms of what was later to become codified as the Water-Land Retreat.⁵⁴

Art historians may have something important to add to this conversation, as well; for the Water-Land Retreat demands the production of pictorial icons of all of the beings summoned during its performance, making it one of the most important impetuses for the production of Chinese Buddhist artworks over the course of the past thousand years. Thousands of such works crafted specifically to be used in performances of the ritual during the Ming, Qing, Republican (1911-1949), and even modern periods survive in the collections of monasteries, museums, and private individuals across the world; such works even have come to appear at auction with a certain frequency in the past decade. Recently, Hou Chong has sought to bring the Yunnanese manual to bear in interpreting cliff carvings throughout Dazu County, drawing attention particularly to certain *gāthās* 偈 that seem to appear nowhere other than at Baoding shan and in the Yunnanese Water-Land manual. Further, he has attempted to draw parallels between the pantheon summoned in the course of the Yunnanese liturgy and that which is depicted at sites such as Baoding shan and Shizhuan shan. The art historian Dai Xiaoyun 戴曉雲, meanwhile, has made extensive use of a manual for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat that was

hua 石篆山石刻：雕在石頭上的水陸畫，” in 2009’ *Zhongguo Chongqing Dazu shike guoji xueshu yantaohui ji Dazu shike lieru “Shijie yichan minglu” 10 zhounian jinianhui* 2009’ 中國重慶大足石刻國際學術研討會暨大足石刻列入《世界遺產名錄》10周年紀念會, unpublished conference proceedings, Chongqing, 2009, vol. 1, 165-178.

⁵⁴ See GSWZ, P. 3913, and PKU 02074.

never included in the Buddhist canon yet that circulated widely, especially in northern China and Korea from the late Southern Song or early Yuan onward.⁵⁵ She has shown that this manual—several copies of which survive in Chinese, Korean, and American collections, and which is likely to be closely related to that described more than fifty years ago by Yoshioka—can be used to identify the deities depicted in almost any Water-Land-related murals or hanging scrolls from the Ming and, to a certain extent, from the Qing. Her work quite rightly reveals that in relying solely on canonical materials to when seeking to interpret paintings associated with the Water-Land Retreat, earlier scholars completely missed the mark by attempting to force conformity between text and image where there was, in fact, none to be found.

Since the late 1990s, Japanese art historians, notably Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔 and Takasu Jun 鷹巢純, have published a great number of essays treating Water-Land-related works from the Song through the Ming that were imported to Japan by pilgrim-monks in the pre-modern period. Ide has published several thorough social-historical studies of the relationship between painting production and religious activity around the major Southern Song port city of Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang Province, through which many Japanese pilgrims and merchants passed, and the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou 杭州, also in Zhejiang.⁵⁶ It was largely thanks to his efforts that the Nara National Museum organized a major exhibition of Five Dynasties and Song materials related to Ningbo in 2009.⁵⁷ In particular, Ide has devoted sections of several essays to

⁵⁵ Dai Xiaoyun 戴曉雲, *Fojiao shuiluhua yanjiu* 佛教水陸畫研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009).

⁵⁶ See especially Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔, “Nihon no Sō Gen butsuga 日本の宋元仏画,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本美術 no. 418 (March 2001).

⁵⁷ *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波：日本仏教 1300 年の源流，すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009).

imagining the ritual origins of a set of one hundred scrolls depicting the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖, which were crafted between 1178 and 1188 near Ningbo, and which now are largely held in the collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺 in Kyoto, Japan.⁵⁸ These works were produced for a temple located near two important Southern Song centers of Water-Land Retreat performance.⁵⁹ Ide notes that the *Five Hundred Arhats* were painted in the fifteen years immediately following the consecration of one of these altars and that a number of the paintings make explicit reference to the performance of the ritual and to legends associated with it. The ritual self-reflexivity of these paintings—that is, their referring to the very ritual (or rituals) in which they may have been used—has led Ide to imply that the paintings may very well have been produced for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. Meanwhile, Takasu Jun, an expert on depictions of the Ten Kings of Purgatory, has also published several essays on paintings and prints related to the Water-Land Retreat in Japanese collections. Like Ide, Takasu has also sought to link certain groups of Song to Ming paintings—such as depictions of the Kings of Purgatory or of the Six Paths 六道 of Rebirth, which lost their original ritual functions upon leaving China and gained new functions after entering the collections of Japanese monasteries—to the Water-Land Retreat.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See, for example, Ide, “Nihon no Sō Gen butsuga,” 66-70; and idem, “Daitokuji denrai gohyaku rakan zu shiron 大徳寺伝来五百羅漢図試論,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 256-257.

⁵⁹ Discussed briefly in Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 48-49; Ide, “Nihon no Sō Gen butsuga,” 60-61; and idem, “Daitokuji denrai gohyaku rakan zu shiron,” 256-257.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Takasu Jun 鷹巣純, “Shin Chionin bon rokudō-e no shudai ni tsuite: suiriku-ga toshite no kanosei 新知恩院本六道絵の主題について —水陸画としての可能性,” *Mikkyō zuzō* 密教図像 18 (December 1999): 69-85; and idem, “Aichi Kenshita no suiriku-ga kanren sakurei ni tsuite 愛知県下の水陸画関連作例について,” *Aichi-ken shi kenkyū* 愛知県史研究 4 (March 2000): 113-128.

Goals of this Dissertation

Relatively few such Water-Land paintings—only a dozen or so—survive from the Song dynasty; nevertheless, they share a number of important compositional, iconographic, and motivic similarities with later works, allowing us to gain some sense of the ritual’s visual profile in the Song. Moreover, no complete Song-dynasty manual for the Water-Land Retreat survives in unedited form; all of the manuals that do purport to directly preserve something of Song practices are either incomplete or exist only as retrospectively edited documents. Both of these facts pose a distinct problem to the budding historian of Chinese Buddhist liturgical art. This dissertation will be an attempt to reconstruct the practice and visual culture of the Song-dynasty Water-Land Retreat in spite of these manifest lacunae in the body of extant source material. While earlier scholars have tended to focus their attention on the late-imperial *imaginaire* of the ritual because of these gaps in the historical record, the primary sources from the ninth, tenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries uncovered by Hou and others—sources that neatly book-end the Song dynasty—give us a good sense of how the ritual is likely to have been performed during that period. More importantly, by regarding these lacunae as an impetus to look beyond the bounds of the genres of ritual manuals and liturgical icons, we quickly find a vast body of materials—epigraphic records, tales of the strange, “statements 疏” penned for particular ritual performances, and, most importantly for my own work, narrativized liturgical artworks—that allow us to propose a convincing reconstruction of the social place of the ritual and of the visual imagination linking text, image, and performance at this time.⁶¹

⁶¹ This is not to say that earlier scholars have ignored such materials; the endnotes to Stevenson’s essay, for example, include a number of important references to accounts of the Water-Land Retreat in scholar-officials’ collected writings and in temple gazetteers. However, he does not foreground these rather more mundane historical records in his work, weaving instead a more theoretical vision of the ritual. On the other hand, scholars of Song religion, such as Edward Davis and, especially, Matsumoto Kōichi, have sought to examine the social place of ritual through precisely such sources. While their work has addressed parallels among Buddhist, Daoist, and vernacular practices

It is this reconstruction of the practice and social place of the ritual that will occupy us throughout Part 1 of this dissertation. Following cues embedded in my source materials, I begin by analyzing late-imperial practices of the ritual in Chapter 1.1, then move backward in time to collect pre-Song traces of the Water-Land Retreat in Chapter 1.2, and ultimately treat its Song forms in Chapter 1.3. This decidedly anachronic method has the advantage of allowing me to begin by defining and analyzing that which we are able to know most definitively—namely, three major traditions of late-imperial practice. Paying close attention to the similarities and differences among these traditions, each of which took shape in a different region of the empire under different sectarian influences, I argue that while a single variant of the Water-Land Retreat has long dominated the contemporary understanding of the ritual, throughout much of its history, it was, in fact, defined by its malleability—by its existence as a simple ritual syntax that could be transformed according to the needs, desires, and means of the sponsors of its performance. Further, in considering the differences in the form of the various ritual manuals that have been passed down to us, I reflect both on their audiences and on the boundaries of the genre of the “ritual manual” itself. In Chapter 1.2, I survey the traces of the ritual before it took its systematized form in the Song. These pre-Song materials give us a sense of the ways in which that open ritual syntax began to take shape at a very specific historical moment—namely, the ninth century, a period that seems to have seen the development of a number of rituals, both Buddhist and Daoist, meant to deal with the ghosts of the rancorous dead. Finally, in Chapter 1.3, I look at the central role that the Water-Land Retreat played in lay religious life during the Song dynasty. I examine the vast variety of functions that it was instrumentalized to fulfill, as well as controversies

at the time, they have invariably—and perhaps inevitably, given the richness of the sources in the Daoist canon 道藏—emphasized the Daoist side of the equation. See, for example, Matsumoto, *Sōdai no Dōkyō to minkan shinkō*, 139-248, esp. 193-213.

surrounding its performance. Most importantly, I analyze the fundamentally modular nature of its ritual syntax, of the texts composed in honor of its performance, and of the icons crafted to be used in performances of it. Although this was a ritual of universal salvation, it was one that depended fully upon a highly efficient, modular conception of all aspects of ritual practice. While this section of my dissertation is largely focused on text, I try always to read with an art historian's eye, paying particular attention to formalist questions of textual structure and to recurring images or motifs that speak to the visual, and often multi-sensorial, imagination that fundamentally informs the performance of ritual. Indeed, I show that text, image, and performance are inextricably bound.

Parts 2 and 3 of this dissertation are more art-historical in nature. While I necessarily draw on earlier scholars' work on the connections between the Water-Land Retreat and certain murals, hanging scrolls, and cliff carvings, in these chapters, I seek to propose a new approach to perennial issue of "art and ritual" in Chinese Buddhism. Most previous studies of this issue have begun with the assumption that the art historian must seek to explain the "function" of an artwork within a given liturgical setting. Most commonly, one matches the deities depicted in paintings to the deities listed in ritual manuals and then suggests that those paintings must have served as the icons toward offerings and obeisance were made. As Daniel Stevenson has argued, however, within the context of the Water-Land Retreat, visual artworks—primarily hanging scrolls and murals—seem to serve no liturgical (that is, iconic) function.⁶² Instead, all offerings are addressed to the tablets that are inscribed with the names of the deities depicted in the paintings and that are placed directly in front of those paintings. Recent studies of the general functional homology among relics, reliquaries, pagodas, portraits, and mummies have made art

⁶² Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation of the *Shuilu fahui*," 58-60.

historians even more acutely aware of the need to move away from a functionalist account of liturgical art.⁶³ After all, from such a liturgical-functional perspective, artworks such as those employed in the Water-Land Retreat seem to be reduced to playing the role of mere backdrops to the ritual actions. However, Stevenson also makes the important observation that “although not the focus of ritual action, [the paintings] constitute the simulacrum in which that action and its intentions unfold, thereby organizing the attention in distinctive ways.”⁶⁴ This ultimately leads him to conclude by suggesting that Water-Land works served to inculcate viewers in the understanding of cosmic morality on which the ritual itself was structured.

While Stevenson’s final reading of the moralizing nature of Water-Land paintings certainly holds true, it perhaps does little explain the form that such images take, which, he acknowledges, is complexly and deliberately wrought. However, his broader observation about the simulacrum of ritual space, and the “striking interactions” that emerge when viewing paintings “within the extended field of ritualized space, symbol, and gesture,”⁶⁵ open a number of important vectors for investigation. Those “striking interactions” with which Stevenson tantalizes his reader, yet which he never specifies, are where my work begins.

Propelled by their own observations of these striking interactions between art and ritual, over the course of the past decade, historians of Chinese art have proposed increasingly sophisticated accounts of the relationship between two. Most recently, and controversially,

⁶³ For two recent responses to this debate, including overviews of relevant scholarship, see Robert H. Sharf, “The Buddha’s Finger Bones at Famensi and the Art of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 1 (March 2011): 38-59, which argues for the need for an aesthetic account of relics; and Michele Matteini, “On the ‘True Body’ of Huineng: The Matter of the Miracle,” *Res* 55/56 (Spring/Autumn 2009): 42-60, which takes up the issue of the signifying power of the materiality of these different kinds of objects. On portraits, see especially Yukio Lippit, “Negative Verisimilitude: The Zen Portrait in Medieval Japan,” in *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Vishakha N. Desai (Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2007), 64-95.

⁶⁴ Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 59.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Eugene Y. Wang and Youn-mi Kim have argued that visual artworks themselves can exert a form of ritual-like agency even in the absence of human ritualists. Thus, a painted banner can reunify the dyadic vapors—that is, *qi* 氣 in its *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 aspects—that disperse when a person dies, a function typically fulfilled by funerary ritual⁶⁶; while inscribed spells and diagrams and miniaturized ritual implements continue to generate merit after an ephemeral liturgical performance has concluded.⁶⁷ While such a compelling conception may do much to help us understand why the villagers of Shibi Township carved the liturgy that they performed in 1210 onto a stone stele, it is less helpful in enabling us to understand the vast majority of artworks produced in the context of the Water-Land Retreat.

To treat these works, I propose to abandon the liturgical-functionalist approach to liturgical art and to instead excavate a shared visual, even multi-sensorial, imagination embodied in image, text, and performance. I will argue that we need not focus our attention solely on works crafted *for* the Water-Land Retreat; rather, I believe that the visual imagination that is given its most vivid expression in the texts and images of the Water-Land Retreat partook of a shared visual imagination of ritual common to multiple liturgies, both Buddhist and Daoist, in the period. When we acknowledge this, it becomes possible to examine a much broader range of materials crafted *in the context of* the Water-Land Retreat; importantly, such materials that are less directly tied to a functionalist understanding of “Water-Land artworks” very often comment directly on the practice of the Water-Land Retreat itself, thus bringing ritual performance and

⁶⁶ See Eugene Y. Wang, “Ascend to Heaven or Stay in the Tomb? Paintings in Mawangdui Tomb 1 and the Virtual Ritual of Revival in Second-Century BCE China,” in *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, edited by Amy Olberding and J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 37-84; idem, “Why Pictures in Tombs? Mawangdui Once More,” *Orientalism* 40, no. 2 (March 2009): 76-83; and idem, “Whereto Heaven? New Perspective on Mawangdui Paintings,” in *Noble Tombs at Mawangdui: Art and Life of the Changsha Kingdom, Third Century BCE to First Century CE* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2008), 41-52, esp. 42-44.

⁶⁷ Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos.”

visual representation into dialogue with one another in ways that earlier scholars have not acknowledged. Indeed, the inherent relationship of ritual to representation will be an issue of constant concern throughout this dissertation.

In Part 2, I begin such an analysis by focusing on the motif of the deity-conveying cloud, the emblem of the irrational unruliness that, as I suggested earlier in this Introduction, seems to have typified one aspect of the Song experience of the world. Again, I take an anachronic approach to my object of study, beginning in Chapter 2.1 with a late-imperial mural that represents the beginning of the systematization of the motif, and that can be most directly connected to a specific, extant Water-Land liturgy. After describing the various functions and metaphorical valences of the cloud as it is described in both image and text, I step back in time in Chapter 2.2 to trace the emergence of this motif both in literature and in Chinese Buddhist art. I show that it was not until the ninth century that cloud-conveyed deities emerged as an independent subgenre of Chinese Buddhist art, leading me to argue that this emergence was intimately connected to the rise of the Water-Land Retreat and other related liturgies in the same period. Chapter 2.3 examines the surprising ways in which Song-dynasty artists and connoisseurs of the visual arts conceptualized the shared mediational character of both ritual and representation. I suggest that the cloud, particularly as employed in works produced within the context of the Water-Land Retreat, was the essential element that allowed such reflection on mediation in image and performance.

Finally, in Part 3, I address the rational, almost empirical, side of the grand paradox facing Song-dynasty artists with which I began this Introduction. Specifically, I examine the issue of the bureaucratization of Buddhist ritual practice and liturgical art in the period. Looking simultaneously at bureaucratic documents employed in ritual and at a variety of visual artworks

that directly depict this bureaucratic vision, I attempt to uncover the new vision of the cosmos that fundamentally underlay this process of bureaucratization. Focusing in particular on their parallels to and differences from Daoist practice, I show that bureaucratic means of communication and structuring function dialectically within the ritual practice and visual culture of the Water-Land Retreat. We see, for example, that the Buddha himself came to be treated as a cosmic bureaucrat who issued edicts and pardons like a this-worldly emperor, yet he simultaneously remained an emblem of the possibility of transcending the concerns of this world. Indeed, although bureaucratic means of communication were essential to ensuring the ritual's efficacy, they were ultimately to be transcended in the course of the ritual performance, thus allowing both the ritualists and the myriad beings that they save to find their place within a more traditional, transcendental, Buddhist vision of the cosmos. I conclude by showing that it is this dialectical vision of the role of bureaucracy within the cosmos that ultimately structures all visual artworks crafted in the context of the Water-Land Retreat. In the end, while this dissertation is intensely concerned with history, and with historicizing the practice and visual culture of the Water-Land Retreat, it is above all an argument for reading text, image, and ritual with an eye toward the visual—and for seeking to uncover the shared motifs, visions, and structures that bring together these otherwise disparate, irreconcilable media.

PART 1 | Faint Traces: Envisioning Early Practices of the Water-Land Retreat

Introduction

The Water-Land Retreat was, and still remains, the grandest, most elaborate ritual in Chinese Buddhism. The stele from Stone Wall Monastery discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation has given us a particular window onto the performance of the ritual in a very specific place at a very specific time—namely, at a remote hill-top temple in southeastern Sichuan in the early thirteenth century. It has given us a sense of the ritual’s cosmic pretensions, its universally salvific intent, its syncretic leanings, and its general performative structure. The window given by that stele, however, is a decidedly narrow one, and consequently, we must ask to what degree we can make generalizations about the history and performance of the ritual from this scintillating text, and the vibrant carvings that accompany it, found in a place far from the centers of power and population in the Song. It is necessary, then, that we attempt to develop a more comprehensive understanding of both the performative and historical profiles of the ritual. Such questions are not as easily answered as they are posed, for, as I will show, the ritual has taken multiple forms—both regional and sectarian—over the course of its twelve-hundred-year history, frustrating any attempts to reconstruct a purely linear history of it. Indeed, I will argue that the openness and malleability of the Water-Land Retreat not only are essential features of the ritual but also were essential to its widespread popularity throughout middle- and late-imperial China. Moreover, the very origin, or origins, of the ritual remains a subject of contention. And the situation is only further complicated when we attempt to restore artworks crafted within the context of the Water-Land Retreat to their proper place in its performance. This situation is, quite simply, fraught; dealing with it will require a clear, though complex, narrative approach.

This narrative will construct itself around three primary questions. First, what is the Water-Land Retreat, how is it generally performed in its most common contemporary form, and how else has it been performed in the past several centuries? Second, when, how, and why did the Water-Land Retreat take shape? Third, how was the Water-Land Retreat performed specifically during the Song dynasty, the primary period of interest in this dissertation? And, as a corollary, what sorts of material evidence survive from the period to bear witness to its practices? To answer these questions, I will begin with the end of the tale—that is, with late-imperial practices of the Water-Land Retreat, which are far better documented than the practices of earlier periods. Then I will move back in time to examine the development of the ritual, from its mytho-historical origins in the sixth century to its more verifiably historical beginnings in the ninth century. This historical trajectory will ultimately take us into the Song dynasty, the period during which the ritual first reached widespread popularity, yet a period for which sources about its practice are simultaneously numerous and taciturn. It is also from the Song that visual artworks produced in the context of the ritual first survive, thus allowing us to investigate the visual imagination that subtends image, text, and performance, which, as I suggested in the Introduction to this dissertation, is my primary interest in studying this ritual from an art-historical perspective. Throughout this part of my dissertation, I will rely on texts of a range of genres¹ and images of a range of media,² constantly using the differing kinds of information

¹ In thinking about genre, I have relied on Tzvetan Todorov, “The Origin of Genres,” translated by Richard M. Berrong, *New Literary History* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1976): 159-170. Todorov’s theory of the ways in which genres are generated in relation both to earlier genres and to contemporary ideological and discursive concerns are used to productive effect to analyze the Chan 禪 genre of the “recorded sayings 語錄” in Judith A. Berling, “Bringing the Buddha down to Earth: Notes on the Emergence of the Yü-lu as a Buddhist Genre,” *History of Religions* 27, no. 1 (August 1987): 56-88.

² On medium, I have found W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen, “Introduction,” in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell and Mark B. N. Hansen (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), vii-xxii, particularly useful.

provided by works in each genre or medium to supplement that provided by works in other genres and media. This multi-genre, multimedia approach should provide a more nuanced, complete, and textilic portrait of the Water-Land Retreat than has yet been given in any language.

Ultimately, I will suggest that the open, malleable structure of the ritual that can be discerned from these diverse texts and images allowed it to absorb practices, as well as doctrinal principles, deities, and conceptions of the cosmos, from other religious traditions. This decidedly heterodox approach differs from most other Chinese Buddhist rituals, which typically focus on a single performative act (such as food bestowal or repentance) or base themselves on a single sutra. Further, I will suggest that the Water-Land Retreat distinguishes itself through its insistence on its own history; a recitation of the history of the origins of the ritual, which, I will argue, was actually composed in the Song dynasty, more than five centuries after the liturgy ostensibly was born, has long been incorporated into every performance of the ritual. It is, in other words, a ritual that seems to possess a certain self-consciousness, a ritual whose codifiers clearly strived to distinguish it from other rituals while simultaneously drawing from them.

A Brief Visual Definition of the Water-Land Retreat

However, our narrative should first begin with a broad definition of our object of study. So what is the Water-Land Retreat, exactly? Nuancing my initial response to this seemingly straight-forward question will occupy us throughout the following chapters. Simply put, as the outline of contents of the Shibi Monastery stele suggested, the Water-Land Retreat is an elaborate affair that involves summoning all beings in the cosmos, both Buddhist and non-, to be fêted and to hear the Buddha's dharma; having been purified in a bathing chamber and having been awakened to the Buddha's teachings, the non-Buddhist beings, especially the ghosts of the

unburied dead, are then sent off to be reborn into a higher path of existence.³ A painted depiction of the ritual, which may have been used in its performance and which is contemporaneous to the Shibi si stele, exemplifies the ritual's essence and serves as a vivid visual introduction to it (Figure 1.1). This work is the seventeenth in a set of one-hundred paintings of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖 that were crafted by the studios of Lin Tinggui 林庭圭 and Zhou Jichang 周季常 near Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang Province, in the Jiangnan 江南 region of southeastern China between 1178 and 1188.⁴ The works are now divided among the collections of Daitoku-ji Monastery 大徳寺 in Kyoto, Japan; the Freer Gallery of Art in

³ The meaning of the name of the ritual also deserves some attention. In general, practitioners of the ritual have glossed the title as referring to the salvation of “all beings of water and land,” an abbreviation of the phrase “all sentient beings of water, land, and the void 水陸空一切有情” that occurs frequently in Chinese Buddhist texts from the Six Dynasties (220-589) onward. See, for example, the canonical exegesis in FJSF, fasc. 1, 787b. In his “Shishi zhengming 施食正名” (“Rectification of the Names of [Rites of] Food Bestowal”), the Northern Song Tiantai master Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), however, suggested that it was so named “because one takes the saintly spirits and leads them to feed in running water, while ghosts are led to eat on pure land 所以取諸仙致食於流水，鬼致食於淨地之謂也。” See Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), “Shishi zhengming 施食正名,” in idem, *Jinyuan ji* 金園集, edited by Huigan 慧觀, fasc. 2, in X57, no. 950, 10c.

⁴ Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔, one of the foremost Japanese scholars of Song liturgical painting, especially works from Hangzhou 杭州 and Ningbo 寧波, has devoted sections of several essays to imagining the ritual origins of these *Five Hundred Arhats*, which were sponsored by lay worshippers for donation to the Huian yuan 惠安院, located near two important Southern Song centers of Water-Land performance—Yuebo si 月波寺, where Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275), the compiler of the canonical manual for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, lived as a monk, and the Zunjiao yuan 尊教院, the site of the Water-Land Altar of the Four Seasons 四時水陸道場 established by a prominent local layman and nationally important official, Shi Hao 史浩 (1106-1194), in 1173. Ide has noted that the *Five Hundred Arhats* were painted in the fifteen years immediately following the consecration of Shi Hao's Water-Land altar and that a number of the paintings make explicit reference to the performance of the ritual and to legends associated with it, which leads Ide to imply that the paintings may very well have been used in performances of the Water-Land Retreat. See Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔, “Nihon no Sō Gen butsuga 日本の宋元仏画,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本美術 no. 418 (March 2001): 66-70; and idem, “Daitoku-ji denrai *Gohyaku rakan zu shiron* 大徳寺伝来五百羅漢図試論,” in *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波: 日本仏教 1300 年の源流，すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 256-257. Direct evidence for the use of these works in the Water-Land Retreat is, however, lacking. Although later sets of Water-Land paintings, such as the sixteenth-century set from Baoning si 寶寧寺, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.1 of this dissertation, include narrativized depictions of arhats that differ from the more iconic format used in most Water-Land paintings, these later sets depict only the sixteen or eighteen arhats, and not the five hundred arhats that we see at Daitoku-ji. At present, then, no direct, *functional* link can be drawn between the Daitoku-ji works and the Water-Land Retreat. The foundational English-language study of these works is Wen Fong, “Five Hundred Lohans at the Daitokuji,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1956. These works and their relation to Shi Hao will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation.

Washington, D.C.; and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. This work and others from its set will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 1.3 and 2.3.

This painting illustrates the critical moment in a performance of the Water-Land Retreat by five arhats—saintly stand-ins for the more mundane monks who would normally perform such a ritual—who are assembled on an outdoor platform, which fills the lower half of the vertical hanging scroll's composition.⁵ Rendered in brilliant mineral pigments, these vibrant arhats immediately draw our attention. One of them, seated in an abbot's chair and holding a *ruyi* 如意 scepter, reads from a text placed atop an altar table. To his right sits a hand-held incense censer, while in front of him are two candles—signifying that this is a nighttime scene—and a larger incense burner. Together, these implements constitute the requisite ritual paraphernalia for the performance of almost any Chinese Buddhist ritual. A young attendant in the lower-right-hand corner of the composition brings the senior ritualist another text. Two of the remaining four arhats bow their heads slightly as though contemplating the profundity of the text being recited, while the other two, pressing their palms together in a gesture of reverence and welcoming, gaze into the distance beyond the edge of the platform, seemingly seeing something that their less clear-eyed partners do not.

Their line of sight leads us to examine the murky expanses of the upper half of the work (Figure 1.2). While rough, vine-bound trees occupy much of the upper-right-hand corner of the composition, it is the dim, mist-filled space to their left that most attracts our attention. Here, we see a variety of figures emerging from the mists, some wearing the crowns of emperors; some, the robes of scholar-officials; others, the armor of soldiers. Identifiable by his six arms, two of

⁵ Unfortunately, the painting is not inscribed, but based on its style, it is attributed to the studio of Zhou Jichang. All paintings in the set were produced between 1178 and 1188. For transcriptions of the inscriptions on the paintings in the set, as well as attributions for the unscripted paintings, see *Sacred Ningbo*, 228-232.

which bear the sun and moon, an *asura* 阿修羅—a type of wrathful demigod counted as one of the Six Paths 六道 of mundane beings (together with *devas* 天, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and Hell-dwellers) that populate the Buddhist cosmos—is also visible. These figures look intently at the ritual proceedings, seemingly engaged in a silent dialogue with the two arhats who peer toward them. But the intensity of the ghosts’ gaze may also suggest something more spiritual—their being enraptured by the dharma, perhaps, or their knowledge that in being allowed to hear these profound, compassionate words, they will be able to attain a better rebirth. Significantly, at first glance, these ghostly figures appear to be rendered solely in monochrome ink, yet upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that they have been enlivened with passages of light vegetal color. This, we might speculate, suggests their gradual coming-into-form—that is, their process of taking material presence within the space of the ritual performance. Having been summoned from unseen realms to hear the teachings of the Buddha, they become visible during their temporary residence within the ritual enclosure.

It is particularly significant that in this depiction of a Water-Land Retreat, the primary emphasis is placed on the bestowal of the Buddha’s teachings—sustenance spiritual in nature rather alimentary. Food is, of course, also distributed in many Buddhist rites, including the Water-Land Retreat.⁶ The seventy-second scroll in the Daitoku-ji set actually depicts the distribution of food to hungry ghosts (Figure 1.3); but rather than depicting the ghosts drawing near to the officiants performing the food bestowal ritual, as is common in literary descriptions of such rites performed during the Water-Land Retreat, the arhats are shown flying out through

⁶ The practices of “dharma bestowal 法施” and “food bestowal 食施” or “material bestowal 財施” are often paired in Chinese Buddhist texts and rituals. (A third form, the “bestowal of no fear 無畏施,” is also mentioned in some texts; see, for example, the Japanese monk Kaizan’s 戒山 introduction, dated 1691, to the *Shishi tonglan* 施食通覽 [Survey of (Rites of) Food Bestowal] in SSTL, 101b-101c.) An extended homily on the bestowal of sustenance both spiritual and alimentary is included in the canonical liturgy for the Water-Land Retreat. See FJSF, fasc. 2, 798a-b.

mid-air to carry sustenance to the ghosts in a watery gully. The difference in the directionality of these two depictions of bestowal is especially important, for the Water-Land Retreat is always typified by its *summoning* and *assembling* of deities and spirits. It is, quite literally, an “assembly 會,” and the ritual, indeed, is often called the “Water-Land Assembly 水陸會” or “Water-Land Dharma Assembly 水陸法會.” Thus, this remarkable work from the late twelfth century gives us the heart of the Water-Land Retreat: the bestowal of the dharma to the wandering spirits that have been called to assemble at a ritual site so that they might attain a better rebirth.

Defining the contours of the ritual more precisely—examining the successive acts that make up its performance, analyzing the layout of the altars, considering the function of the various ritual personnel—is a fairly easy task so long as we rely on post-Song evidence. However, excavating the place and practice of this rite in the Song and before will require significantly more creativity. For this reason, in the chapters that follow, I will begin with contemporary evidence and progressively move backward in time, ultimately arguing that the Water-Land Retreat, by virtue of its decidedly open and, in a sense, modularly constructed liturgy, serves an ideal metaphor by which to understand major transformations of Buddhist ritual practice in the Song. These transformations, like so many other major transformations in the Song, established models of liturgical practice, human-deity relations, and forms of visual representation that endure into the present.

CHAPTER 1.1 | Endings: Late-Imperial Liturgies for the Water-Land Retreat

Contemporary Performances: The Canonical Manual

Today, the essential act of dharma-bestowal depicted in the Daitoku-ji arhat painting remains at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat, which is generally performed according to Qing-dynasty expansions⁷ of the six-fascicle *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 (*Ritual Manual for Performing the Retreat of the Grand Assembly of All Saintly and Mundane Beings of Water and Land in This Dharma-Realm*),⁸ first compiled by the late-Song Tiantai monk Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275)⁹ and revised extensively in the late Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535-1615), one of the most prolific reformers of Buddhist practice in the period.¹⁰ In its most common contemporary form,¹¹ the ritual takes

⁷ See *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun* 法界聖凡水陸大齋普利道場性相通論, compiled by Zhiguan 咫觀 (act. mid nineteenth century), X74, no. 1498; *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai falun baochan* 法界聖凡水陸大齋法輪寶懺, compiled by Zhiguan 咫觀 (act. mid nineteenth century), X74, no. 1499; and SLYGHB. N.B.: Daniel B. Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land,” in *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Marsha Weidner (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 61, n. 10, however, observes that two editions of the SLYGHB are currently available: a 1985 reprint published by Xinwenfeng chubanshe, Taipei, of a 1917 edition first published at Tiantong Monastery 天童寺, Mingzhou 明州 [i.e., Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang Province], and a 1924 edition with the preface by Yinguang, which has been republished multiple times both in Taiwan and mainland China. Stevenson notes that the editions are “identical in content” but “arrange the subsidiary chapters differently.” I have not had access to the former text.

⁸ FJSF.

⁹ On Zhipan and his composition of the FJSF, see Satō Seijun 佐藤成順, “Busso tōki senjū no basho: Geppasan Jihi fusai-ji to Fukusensan Enjuō kōfuku-ji ni tsuite 『仏祖統紀』撰述の場所：月波山慈悲普濟寺と福泉山延寿王広福寺について,” *Indo bunka to Bukkyō shisō no kichō to tenkai* インド文化と仏教思想の基調と展開 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2003), vol. 2, 3-28; and Tada Kōshō 多田孝正, “Shiban to Busso tōki 志磐と『仏祖統紀』,” *Eizan gakujutsu kenkyū kiyō* 叡山学術研究紀要 25 (2003): 179-202.

¹⁰ On Zhuhong, see Ch ün-fang Y ü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

¹¹ While the expansions of Zhipan and Zhuhong’s version of the ritual are the most commonly performed Water-Land liturgy in contemporary China, a variant form of the ritual is still performed in Yunnan Province 雲南省, as Hou Chong has described. See Hou Chong 侯冲, “Shizhuan shan shike: diao zai shitou shang de shuilu hua 石篆山石刻：雕在石頭上的水陸畫,” in 2009’ *Zhongguo Chongqing Dazu shike guoji xueshu yantaohui ji Dazu shike lieru “Shijie yichan minglu” 10 zhounian jinianhui lunwen huibian* 2009’ 中國重慶大足石刻國際學術研討會暨大足石

seven days to perform, and involves calling down all of the beings of the cosmos, both saintly 聖 and mundane 凡, to an Inner Altar 內壇, while subsidiary rites are performed at the various stations of an Outer Altar 外壇.¹² The surviving text by Zhipan and Zhuhong consists solely of instructions—as well as the homilies, mantras, and vows to be recited—for the performance of the rites of the Inner Altar. Specifically, it treats the opening of the Inner Altar on the morning of first full day of the ritual 行晨朝開啟法事,¹³ the dispatch of documents to summon spirits 行發符法事,¹⁴ and the summoning of deities to the Upper and Lower Halls of the Inner Altar 召請法事¹⁵; rites for dismissing the spirits were explicitly added 補 by Zhuhong.¹⁶ Moreover, Zhipan and Zhuhong's text concerns itself solely with the actions of the Ritual Master 法師, who is engaged primarily in meditative acts of visualization throughout the performance of the ritual; the Cantor 表白, who is responsible for intoning mantras, leading the audience in chants, and reciting certain homilies; the Sponsor 施主; and the Assembly 眾人.¹⁷ The preparation of the ritual space and the performance of the liturgy require far more officiants than Zhipan and Zhuhong's text would indicate; indeed, in contemporary performances, participating monks

刻列入《世界遺產名錄》10周年紀念會論文彙編, unpublished conference proceedings, Chongqing, 2009, vol. 1, 165-178. See also, idem, *Yunnan Azhali jiao jingdian yanjiu* 雲南阿吒力教經典研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 2008), 315-323.

¹² The basic contours have been summarized in Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*," 30-41 and 49-60; and Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 236-241.

¹³ FJSF, fasc. 1, 784b-787c.

¹⁴ Ibid., 787c-789a.

¹⁵ Ibid., fasc. 2 to 6, 789b-819c.

¹⁶ Ibid., fasc. 6, 820a-822c.

¹⁷ On the roles of the different ritualists, see *ibid.*, fasc. 1, 787b-787c.

number in the tens to hundreds, while historical records speak of performances of the ritual with more than one thousand monks.¹⁸ More explicit—and at times, clearly expanded—instructions for the performance of the subsidiary rites of the Inner Altar, as well as discussions of the rites of the Outer Altar, are to be found in the Qing-dynasty expansions of the text.

Given the centrality of Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy in the contemporary imagination and performance of the Water-Land Retreat, a brief discussion of this work, which has already been surveyed by previous scholars, remains necessary; that this liturgy likely preserves something of late-Song practices of the ritual near Ningbo makes such a discussion all the more necessary for the present dissertation. The first of the six fascicles of Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual treats the preliminary activities of securing the ritual site for the rites of summoning and offering that fill the remaining fascicles. After performing generic rites of commencement—taking refuge in the Three Treasures; reciting mantras of self-purification and pacification of the monastery spirits; and burning incense—a variety of protective deities, and their attendants, are summoned to guard the ritual site. They include Ucchuṣma 大穢迹金剛; the Ten *Vidyārājas* 十大明王; Brahma 大梵天王, Indra 帝釋天主, the Four Heavenly Kings 護世四王, and the Eight Classes of *Devas* and Dragons 天龍八部; the Monastery Guardian; and the City God, local shrine spirits, and hearth gods.¹⁹ The site is then sealed through the sprinkling of spell-empowered water and through the burning of incense.²⁰ The Thousand-Armed, Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara 千手千眼大慈大悲觀世音自在菩薩摩訶薩 is invoked and his mantra is recited

¹⁸ Mentioned in Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 46.

¹⁹ FJSF, fasc. 1, 785a-785c.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 785c-786a.

to purify and consecrate water.²¹ The myriad Vairocana Buddhas 十方剎土一切毗盧遮那不空如來 are also summoned to empower consecratory water, and a short discourse on purifying and converting through the power of water and spells is given.²² Finally, a formalized series of questions and answers about the meaning of the title of the ritual and the different tasks of the ritualists is recited, followed by a litany of warnings about the necessity of sincerity in performing the ritual.²³

These opening procedures are followed the next day by invocations of the Four Tally-Bearing Messengers 持符使者—bureaucratic functionaries who are tasked with carrying announcements about the performance of the ritual to the spirits of the Four Heavens 四天, through the realms of the sky 空 and the earth 地, and to the Earth Bureau 地府—that is, the Netherworld.²⁴ Bureaucratic documents of summoning, statements regarding the circumstances of this particular performance, and effigies of the messengers are burned after a short discourse on the importance of sending such memorials so that all beings in the cosmos will know to attend the ritual.²⁵

The remaining fascicles of the manual deal with summoning the spirits of the Inner Altar, which often takes the form of an entire hall of a monastery; some monasteries actually have halls

²¹ Ibid., 786a-786c.

²² Ibid., 786c-787b.

²³ Ibid., 787b-787c.

²⁴ Ibid., 787c-788c, esp. 788a-788c.

²⁵ Ibid., 788c-789a. For further discussion of this rite, see Part 3 of this dissertation.

specifically dedicated to the performance of the ritual.²⁶ The rear wall of the space of the Inner Altar, as well as the rear sections of the inner wall or screen that demarcates the center of the ritual area, are designated as the “Upper Hall 上堂,” which serves as the temporary dwelling place for the Buddhist beings called down to attend the ritual performance (Figure 1.4).²⁷ The instructions for summoning these spirits fill all of the second fascicle of the manual. The classes of deities, each of which is exemplified by ten or more particular figures, include 1) the buddhas 佛²⁸; 2) the dharma 法²⁹; 3) bodhisattvas 菩薩³⁰; 4) pratyekabuddhas 緣覺³¹; 5) *śrāvakas* 聲聞³²; 6) patriarchs 祖師³³; 7) spirits and immortals of the five penetrations 五通神仙³⁴; 8) *devarājas* 天王 and *devas* 天³⁵; 9) spirit kings 神王—that is, protective deities, including protectors of monasteries and relics and protectors of the state and cities³⁶; and 10) the Ten Great Masters of the Water-Land Retreat 製儀立法十大士—ten historical, or mytho-historical, figures associated

²⁶ On the history of “Shuilu halls 水陸堂·水陸殿,” which appeared by the end of the Tang dynasty (618-907), see Klose, 142-146; and Zhang Shiqing 張十慶, *Zhongguo Jiangnan Chanzong siyuan jianzhu* 中國江南禪宗寺院建築 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), 92-94.

²⁷ The instructions for the summoning of these deities may be found in FJSF, fasc. 2, 789b–800a. The deities of the Upper and Lower Halls are conveniently charted in Appendix 1 of this dissertation and in Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 51.

²⁸ FJSF, fasc. 2, 789c-790a.

²⁹ Ibid., 790a-790b.

³⁰ Ibid., 790b.

³¹ Ibid., 790b-790c.

³² Ibid., 790c-791a.

³³ Ibid., 791a.

³⁴ Ibid., 791a-791b.

³⁵ Ibid., 791b.

³⁶ Ibid., 791b-c.

with the earliest performance of the Water-Land Retreat by Emperor Wu 武 (464-549; r. 502-549) of the Liang dynasty (502-557) and with its codification during the Song dynasty.³⁷ In other words, the Upper Hall includes figures both awakened and un-, all of whom maintain an unequivocally positive relationship to the teachings of the Buddha. After the deities have assumed their positions with the Upper Hall, they are bathed (through the recitation of mantras)³⁸; offerings of thrones, incense, flowers, and pure water are presented to them³⁹; spell-empowered food, pure clothes, and other gifts are bestowed upon them⁴⁰; and finally, a discourse on the origin of the ritual, its goals and benefits, as well as a statement of the specific prayers of the sponsors, are recited to these saintly beings.⁴¹

Later manuals tell us that the Upper Hall is to be adorned with paintings of the deities—either in the form of portable hanging scrolls or permanently visible murals—, as well as name tablets for them, which consist simply of the name of the deity inscribed on a piece of paper or wood and which are often used only for a single performance of the rite.⁴² The figures are arranged more or less hierarchically in terms of their degree of spiritual awakening. Vexingly for art historians, despite the presence of painted representations of the deities, it is the name

³⁷ Ibid., 791c-792a. These figures include Ānanda 阿難陀; the saintly monk of the Liang dynasty 梁朝神僧聖師; Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty 梁武皇帝; the Saintly Master Baozhi 梁朝誌公聖師 and the Chan Master Sengyou 梁朝祐公律師, also of the Liang; the Chan Master Ying of Fahai Monastery 唐朝法海英公禪師 of the Tang; and the Chan Master Foyin 宋朝佛印禪師, the Chan Master Changlu Zongze 長蘆蹟公禪師, the scholar-official Su Shi 蘇軾, and the layman Yang E 楊鏐, all of the Song.

³⁸ Ibid., 792a-792b.

³⁹ Ibid., 792b-793a.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 793b-797a.

⁴¹ 797b-800a.

⁴² Full instructions for the creation of these paintings and placards are not found in Zhuhong's manual, though his postface does discuss the proper number and proper treatment of the paintings. See *ibid.*, fasc. 6, 823a. More complete instructions for the creation of the paintings and placards may be found in *SLYGHB*, fasc. 4, esp. 3a, 127; 48a-70b, 150-161; and 73a-74b, 162-163.

tablets, not the paintings, that seem to be treated as the focus of all ritual activity and offerings. Daniel Stevenson has suggested that during the ritual performance proper, these paintings partake of the general logic of “adornment 莊嚴” by which a ritual enclosure is elaborately decorated to create a space suitable for the descent of honored deities; further, he notes that given that the paintings—be they murals or hanging scrolls—often would continue to be displayed and made visible to the public for some time after the conclusion of the ritual, they may also have served a more general didactic function, instructing viewers about both the Buddhist pantheon and the logic of karma.⁴³ However, I will argue throughout this dissertation that the artworks crafted for the performance of this ritual also served more complex functions, both creating an environment that separated viewer-worshippers from the experiences of daily life (as Stevenson has also suggested) and familiarizing them with aspects, both visible and hidden, of the ritual performance itself. Further, I will argue that both the ritual and the visual artworks engage with a complex, shared visual imagination that a functionalist account of liturgical art does little to explain.

Despite the explicitly Buddhist nature of the Water-Land Retreat, it actively embraces spirits of all other major Chinese religious traditions. However, these deities are treated somewhat ambiguously: they are figures who are at once to be venerated and to be converted to the Buddha’s path. The ritual officiants summon these deities and spirits—such as the Daoist Three Primes, Confucius 孔子 and some of his most famed followers, and local deities like the Earth God 土地—, as well as the ghosts of the ancestors of the ritual’s sponsors and any other wandering ghosts nearby, to the remaining space of the Inner Altar below the Upper Hall, which

⁴³ Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 54-60, esp. 58-60.

is known as the “Lower Hall 下堂.”⁴⁴ These acts of summoning, which take place on the evening of the third day of the ritual, fill most of the third fascicle of the manual. The full list of figures summoned includes: 1) deities of the celestial bureaucracy (e.g., planetary gods) 十方法界，四空四禪，六欲諸天，日月星天，天曹聖眾⁴⁵; 2) deities of the terrestrial bureaucracy (e.g., gods of the mountains and rivers) 十方法界，五嶽四瀆，地載遊空，福德諸神，係祀靈廟⁴⁶; 3) officials of the human bureaucracy, including famed Confucian and Daoist figures 十方法界，帝王后妃，文武官僚，儒宗賢哲，仙道隱逸⁴⁷; 4) humans of various occupations 十方法界，農民工商，醫卜雜流，貴賤男女，十類人倫⁴⁸; 5) *asuras* 十方法界，四類受生，五趣所攝，山間海底，阿脩羅眾⁴⁹; 6) hungry ghosts and wandering spirits 十方法界，餓口鬼王，三品九類，諸餓鬼眾，橫死孤魂⁵⁰; 7) the Ten Kings of Purgatory and their attendants 十方法界，閻摩羅王，十王王妹，十八小王，諸司主吏⁵¹; 8) denizens of Hell 十方法界，八熱八寒，諸大地獄，諸獨孤獄，一切受苦囚徒⁵²; 9) animals 十方法界，正住鐵圍山間，邊住徧

⁴⁴ The rites of summoning, bathing, and presentation of offerings to these myriad figures fill nearly half (three fascicles) of Zhuhong’s manual. See FJSF, fasc. 3 to 5, 800a-819b.

⁴⁵ FJSF, fasc. 3, 800c-801a.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 801a.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 801a-801b.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 801b.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 801b-801c.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 801c-802a.

⁵¹ Ibid., 802a.

⁵² Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 51. FJSF, fasc. 3802a-802b.

五趣中，鱗甲羽毛，十類旁生⁵³; 10) denizens of Purgatory awaiting rebirth 十方法界，諸趣往來，七七日內，七返受生，中陰趣眾⁵⁴; 11) local gods (Zhipan and Zhuhong specifically invoke the spirits of Hangzhou) 杭州府城隍列廟，九縣鄉坊，係祀靈祠，諸侯王眾⁵⁵; 12) guardians of the monastery 本寺所屬，當境神祠，伽藍住居六神，山門奉事香火，諸神神⁵⁶; 13) spirits of the deceased members of the sponsor's family 施家上世，祖宗亡靈，師友親眷，諸位神儀⁵⁷; and 14) spirits of the deceased clergy and laity of the monastery 本山上世，祖宗亡靈，師友親眷，諸位神儀。⁵⁸ Further, the wandering spirits of people who have suffered any of twelve different types of violent deaths—everyone from soldiers killed in far-off lands, to the victims of pirates, and women who died in labor—are invoked.⁵⁹ As with the deities of the Upper Hall, the beings summoned to the Lower Hall are arranged hierarchically in terms of their position both within the Buddhist cosmos (*asuras*, for example, occupy a higher path of rebirth than hungry ghosts) and within competing conceptions of the cosmos—for example, in the Daoist cosmos, celestial deities occupy a hierarchically (and physically) higher position than the terrestrial bureaucrats that reside in a particular town or mountain. The figures summoned to this Lower Hall are, however, sharply differentiated from those occupying the Upper Hall by virtue of the fact that none is awakened; it is toward these figures, then, that offerings—in particular,

⁵³ Ibid., 802b-802c.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 802c.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 803a.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 803a-803b.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 803b-803c. Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 51, reverses the last two classes of beings.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 803c.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 804b-806c.

offerings of the dharma (i.e., sermons) and offerings of lay precepts—are primarily directed during the Water-Land Retreat. As is true of the Upper Hall, though, the Lower Hall is also adorned with paintings and with the name tablets that serve as the temporary terrestrial dwelling places of the spirits.

The visual climax of the rites associated with the Lower Hall comes during a sequence known as “Breaking the Earth Prisons 破地獄.”⁶⁰ By means of the recitation of mantras, intense visualization on the part of the Ritual Master, and the use of paper models of the Earth Prisons of Hell, the ritualists break open the gates that confine Hell-dwellers within their place of torture and open a path to salvation. Mantras free them of their fears, open their needle-thin throats so that they may fill their bellies, and release them from the karmic ties 冤結 that first caused their being condemned to this lowest of the Six Paths of rebirth. Two further mantras are used to bathe the myriad spirits of the Lower Hall in a “bath chamber 浴室”⁶¹ and to provide them with the pure robes in which they will soon receive lay Buddhist precepts and ascend to more exalted seats within the hall.

These rites of precept bestowal and the ascension to the Upper Hall are the focus of the fourth fascicle. Although performed solely by means of the recitation of mantras and meditative visualization, the sequence of steps in this bestowal of precepts to supramundane spirits is not unlike the process that a lay Buddhist practitioner would undergo when receiving the precepts

⁶⁰ Ibid., 807a-808b. Such a rite is also commonly included in Daoist rituals, as well. For an introduction to the topic, and references to recent scholarship, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 254-261. A more complete analysis of this rite is included in John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 216-237. A detailed account of a Southern Song version of the rite may be found in Judith M. Boltz, “Opening the Gates of Purgatory: A Twelfth-Century Taoist Meditation Technique for the Salvation of Lost Souls,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies*, edited by Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institut belge des hautes études chinoises, 1983), vol. 2, 487-511.

⁶¹ FJSF, fasc. 3, 807c-808b. The awakened beings are also bathed. See *ibid.*, fasc. 2, 792a-792b.

himself. The spirits of the Lower Hall are first led to take refuge in the Three Treasures.⁶² They then repent past transgressions and resolve to attain *bodhicitta* 發菩提心.⁶³ Finally, they take the ten principal bodhisattva precepts 十重戒 of the *Brahma's Net Sutra* 梵網經, and again take refuge in the Three Treasures and the ten classes of saintly beings of the Upper Hall. These acts of resolving to attain *bodhicitta* and receiving lay precepts on the part of laity both living and dead are a component of all variations on the performance of the Water-Land Retreat and possibly should be seen as one of the defining features of the liturgy.⁶⁴ Zhipan, in keeping with his Tiantai sectarian training, quotes extensively from commentaries on precept bestowal by the Tiantai patriarchs Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597) and Zhili 知禮 (960-1028). The now-Buddhicized spirits are then led to “ascend the altar 登壇” and take their more exalted places, to which offerings of sustenance both alimentary and spiritual—the sole topic of the fifth fascicle—are presented.⁶⁵ Ultimately, these myriad beings are sent to be reborn in the Western Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha, and, in the section of the manual explicitly appended by Zhuhong to Zhipan's manual, the other saintly spirits are dismissed after a series of prayers and discourses.⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid., fasc. 4, 808b-810c.

⁶³ Ibid., 810c-811a.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 811c-812b. I thank Prof. Hou Chong for pointing out to me the importance of the resolution to attain *bodhicitta* and of precept bestowal in the Water-Land Retreat. (Personal conversation with Hou Chong, March 2010.) Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 50, mentions that “large-scale ceremonies for lay bodhisattva and five-precept ordination—upon occasion, even monastic ordination—” were introduced to the Outer Altar of the Water-Land Retreat site only in the Qing period. As I will show below, the bestowal of precepts has always been at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat, though these precepts typically were bestowed upon deceased spirits, and not necessarily upon the living participants in the rite. For a number of recent perspectives on the bestowal of precepts, see the essays collected in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, edited by William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), especially the contributions by David W. Chappell and Daniel A. Getz.

⁶⁵ 813a-819b.

⁶⁶ FJSF, 819b-820a.

Ritual Modularity in the Outer Altar

Meanwhile, in late-imperial and contemporary performances of the ritual, the posts 所 of the Outer Altar of the ritual site—typically six in total—are used for the performance of various repentance rituals and sutra recitations, all of which are considered subsidiary to the actions performed in the Inner Altar.⁶⁷ Not mentioned at all in Zhipan and Zhuhong’s manual, these rites are detailed most clearly in the *Shuilu yigui huiben* 水陸儀軌會本 first compiled in the Qing dynasty by Yirun Yuanhong 儀潤源洪 (act. early nineteenth century). At the first position, the Repentance Rite of the Liang Emperor [Wu] 梁皇懺 is performed during the first four days of the Water-Land Retreat, after which the *Diamond Sutra* 金剛經 is recited on the fifth day, the *Sutra of the Medicine Buddha* 藥師經 on the sixth, and the final fascicle of the *Brahma’s Net Sutra* 梵網經下卷 (an explication of the bodhisattva precepts) on the final day. At the second post, two monks together recite the *Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴經 for seven days, while at a third position, six monks 六眾 recite the *Lotus Sutra* 法華經. The *Sūrangama Sutra* 楞嚴經 is recited at a fourth post, and the two *Amitāyus Sutras* 無量壽經, the *Sutra on the Visualization of Amitāyus* 觀無量壽經, the *Golden Light Sutra* 金光明經, and the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* 圓覺經 are recited by six monks at another position. A final post, called the “Pure Land Altar 淨土壇,” is used for the recitation of the name of the Buddha Amitābha 念佛 by eight monks.

Though seemingly eclectic, the sutras recited and practices performed at the Outer Altar can be understood as giving a succinct summary of the basic doctrines and practices popular among

⁶⁷ See SLYGHB, fasc. 4, 5b-6b, 128-129. As Stevenson, 68, n. 92, points out, there exists considerable disagreement on the number of positions of the Outer Altar. Different manuals and different ritualists configure the Outer Altar very differently, thus lending further credence to the notion that Water-Land Retreat exists as a decidedly malleable ritual syntax.

late-imperial Chinese Buddhist worshippers. More importantly, these outer rites give expression to the fundamental sense of modularity that underlies the performance of the ritual.

Aside: Dating and Orthopraxy

Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy for the Water-Land Retreat presents itself as a text with a direct link to the past. Zhipan ostensibly penned the liturgy based on the works of the ten Water-Land patriarchs whom his liturgy venerates as the tenth category of saints of the Upper Hall. Zhuhong later appended the final section of fascicle six of the extant manual, clearly announcing his addition by placing the character “*bu* 補” at the top of the section.⁶⁸ The conceit, then, is that the ritual has remained all-but-unchanged over fifteen centuries, experiencing little more than Zhuhong's slight expansion of Zhipan's original liturgy, itself but a minor revision of the earlier liturgies. While Yirun presents a more explicit set of instructions for performing the ritual in his nineteenth-century *Huiben*, we readers, worshippers, or ritualists are meant to see this text, like the manual by Zhipan and Zhuhong that lies at its core, as part of an unbroken tradition of ritual performance extending back to Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty. Although Zhuhong, Yirun, and the other Qing-dynasty reformers each expanded Zhipan's manual slightly, they did so only with the intent of clarifying, or making more explicit, Zhipan's instructions.⁶⁹ Ritual, in other words, is meant to be seen as a resolutely conservative medium,⁷⁰ a medium that privileges orthopraxy above all else; as numerous miracle tales 靈驗記 regarding ritual performance tell us,

⁶⁸ See FJSF, 820a, onward.

⁶⁹ SLYGHB, fasc. 1, 4a-11b, 4-7, on the other hand, includes an extensive account of all changes that Yirun made to Zhipan and Zhuhong's original ritual, as well as justifications for those changes.

⁷⁰ On the theoretical dimensions of change and conservatism in ritual practice, see Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1997; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 210-252.

should a ritualist fail to perform the ritual as his master did, the performance is doomed to inefficacy.⁷¹

Nevertheless, should we choose to brush aside this pretense of conservatism, it becomes clear that Yirun, Zhuhong, and others were more disingenuous than they might let on. Zhuhong, for example, seems to have introduced a number of subtle, though ultimately important, changes into Zhipan's manual. While the manual itself does not clearly indicate how extensively Zhuhong edited its first five fascicles, other sources give us some sense of how the manual has been revised since Zhipan first penned it in the 1260s. For example, examining the list of deities included in the Upper and Lower Halls of the Inner Altar of Zhipan and Zhuhong's version of the ritual and in the subsequent Qing-dynasty manuals based on it, we might note that a total of twenty-four classes of beings are represented (in paintings and/or tablets) and worshipped in these later versions of the ritual. Somewhat surprisingly, this is two classes fewer than Zhipan claims to have included in his original recension when discussing it in his own encyclopedic history of Buddhism, the *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (*Comprehensive Account of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*).⁷² The fact that such a discrepancy exists in Zhuhong's recension suggests that it may not hem as closely to his model text as Zhuhong claims.⁷³ In the postface appended to the

⁷¹ For examples of the terrible fates that should befall those who do not respect orthopraxy, see CGSL, "Jiaojie 教誡," 16a-20b.

⁷² See FZTJ, fasc. 33, 322a, where Zhipan mentions having included 26 hanging scrolls in his rite.

⁷³ Contemporary scholars have taken generally taken him at his word. See, for example, Edward L. Davis, 238, who claims that "the many continuities between Zhu Hong's text and both earlier descriptions and later version of the *Shuilu zhai* suggests an overwhelming conservatism; thus I am confident that we can use this sixteenth-century manual as an accurate reflection of Song practice." As I discuss in further detail below, despite the seeming conservatism of Water-Land practice, the ritual has always been characterized by a distinct openness and plurality. Many forms of Water-Land practice have existed throughout history, and many forms existed contemporaneously. Indeed, it may be more correct to speak of "Water-Land practices" or "Water-Land Retreats" given this plurality. Nevertheless, the various manuals for the performance of variants of the ritual invariably present a conservative façade, including, for example, an account of the mytho-history of the ritual in its every performance.

canonical copy of Zhuhong's manual included in the *Xuzang jing* 續藏經 (*Expanded Tripiṭaka*)—which is, actually, an excerpt from one of Zhuhong's notebooks of miscellaneous jottings 筆記⁷⁴—, he specifically reflects on the issue of the number of paintings used in performances of the ritual. In particular, Zhuhong decries the overly complex, mistaken practices of the Jin shan 金山 tradition—a tradition sometimes known as the “northern” tradition, which stood in opposition to Zhipan's “southern” tradition, practiced in the comparatively southerly locale of Ningbo.⁷⁵ Only Zhipan's liturgy, he says, gets to the essence of the rite 至精至密, being both “supremely concise and supremely simple 至簡至易.” Because the liturgy was only available in the area of Siming 四明 (modern-day Ningbo), he edited and corrected it, and “revitalized 重壽” it so that it might be more widely circulated.⁷⁶ Despite his claims to have respected the integrity of the original text, it seems he may have been somewhat overzealous in his polishing of the liturgy, actually removing two of the classes of beings that Zhipan included in his original manual. It seems unwise, then, to uncritically treat this sixteenth-century recension as fully reflective of the late-Song practice that it promises to have preserved.

⁷⁴ See his “Shuilu yiwen 水陸儀文,” *Zhuchuang sanbi* 竹窗三筆, 1615, which is included in *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙, fasc. 14, in J33, no. B277, 66a-66b.

⁷⁵ FJSF, fasc. 6, 823a-b. The *locus classicus* for this terminological distinction between the “northern” and “southern” variants of the Water-Land Retreat is to be found in the “Shuilu dazhai shu 水陸大齋疏” (“Statement for a Great Retreat of [All Beings] of Water and Land”) by the late-Ming/early-Qing monk Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655). See Zhixu 智旭 (1599-1655), *Lingfeng Ouyi dashi zonglun* 靈峰藕益大師宗論, edited by Chengshi 成時 (d. 1678), fasc. 7, in J36, no. B348, 386c-387a. Because the term “northern Water-Land 北水陸” seems to appear only in this text, and because it is clear that both the TDMY and the FJSF circulated outside of their respective northern and southern regions, Hou Chong 侯冲, “Hongji zhi fanyi: Zongze ‘Shuilu yi’ kao 洪濟之梵儀: 宗蹟《水陸儀》考,” unpublished conference paper, “Dierjie Hebei Chanzong wenhua luntan 第二届河北禅宗文化论坛,” Xingtai 邢台, Hebei Province, 18-20 May 2012, 17-18, argues that the terms “northern” and “southern” Water-Land are misleading and are consequently not worth using. For a thorough account of the “northern” tradition of Water-Land practice, see Dai Xiaoyun 戴曉雲, *Fojiao shuilu hua yanjiu* 佛教水陸畫研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009), esp. 28-49. This northern tradition is also discussed in detail below.

⁷⁶ FJSF, fasc. 6, 823b.

Sadly, no reliable copy of Zhipan's ritual manual predating Zhuhong's revisions survives to allow us to investigate Zhuhong's revisions more precisely. Nevertheless, several copies of a text that titles itself the *Jiban mun* 志磐文 (*Text of Zhipan*) printed in Joseon-dynasty (1392-1910) Korea survive in the Central Library 中央圖書館 of Dongguk University 東國大學 in Seoul, South Korea. The earliest of these editions dates to 1470, more than a century before Zhuhong revised Zhipan's original manual; this Joseon court-sponsored edition was then reissued several times over the course of the following centuries, the content remaining identical save for the addition of postfaces explaining the circumstances of the reprinting of the 1470 edition.⁷⁷ Despite the claims made by these texts that they are copies of Zhipan's manual, the true origin of their content poses some problems to the historian of the ritual. These Joseon editions begin predictably enough with Zhipan's "Procedures for the Morning Opening [of the Altar] 行晨朝開啟法事." The text is almost identical to the content of the same section of the canonical recension transmitted in the *Xuzang jing*. Small variations are sometimes to be found in the use of homophonous characters; further, the canonical recension includes slightly more extensive instructions regarding the performance of certain liturgical acts, perhaps suggesting that a later editor of the text—perhaps Zhuhong himself—felt it necessary to make the original text more explicit. However, after the conclusion of this act in the liturgy, the Joseon manual diverges completely from the canonical recension. Indeed, the remainder of the Joseon manual seems to have been compiled from a variety of other sources, some of which do not seem to

⁷⁷ I sincerely thank Prof. Chung Woothak of Dongguk University for providing me with a photocopy of the 1470 edition of this manual. To my knowledge, the only copy of this manual published in full is the 1573 reprint in BGSB, 573-620. The 1470 edition was included in the exhibition "Sacred Ningbo" at the Nara National Museum in Nara, Japan, in 2009. See object #116 in *Sacred Ningbo*, 180 and 311.

accord fully with each other.⁷⁸ For example, the manual alternately divides the pantheon summoned during the rite into upper and lower categories of ten types of spirits each⁷⁹—that is, a bi-partite structure similar to that employed in Zhipan and Zhuhong’s manual—and into a tri-partite structure (upper, middle, and lower) that more closely resembles that employed in other versions of the Water-Land Retreat discussed later in this chapter.⁸⁰ Further, it seems that this ritual may well have been intended to be performed over the course of a single day and night, a period far shorter than the seven days typically employed by practitioners of Zhipan and Zhuhong’s liturgy.

The existence of these Korean recensions thus raises a number of questions about Zhipan and Zhuhong’s liturgy while answering few. On the one hand, the closeness of the first section of the Korean recensions to the same passage in the *Xuzang jing* edition may suggest that Zhuhong did not substantially alter Zhipan’s manual overall, perhaps simply making certain instructions more explicit. On the other hand, certain details—notably, the number of deities summoned during the rite—were clearly changed after Zhipan’s composition of the manual; and

⁷⁸ In fact, some passages are taken directly from the TDMY, an alternative version of the Water-Land Retreat which is discussed in detail below. Compare, BGSB, 23a-23b, 585, to TDMY, fasc. 1, 34b.

⁷⁹ See, for example, BGSB, 16a, 582.

⁸⁰ See, for example, *ibid.*, 86a, 617, which specifically refers to upper, middle, and lower categories of spirits. The whole structure of summoning throughout the rite quite closely corresponds to that found in the TDMY, though the precise language used when summoning differs. The rites of precept bestowal in the Korean manuals also differ significantly from the TDMY. In the Korean manual, only the five most basic precepts—that is, prohibitions against killing, stealing, debauchery, false speech, and consumption of alcohol—are bestowed (*ibid.*, 82a, 615); and these rites of bestowal are envisioned to be overseen by Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼, the Buddha Supreme Venerable King of the Nāgas 龍種上尊王佛 (i.e., Mañjuśrī 文殊), Maitreya 彌勒, and the myriad buddhas and bodhisattvas (*ibid.*, 78a, 613), the typical retinue of such supramundane preceptors at least from the sixth century onward (see, for example, Huisi’s 慧思 [515-577] foundational liturgy for precept bestowal, the *Shou pusa jie yi* 受菩薩戒儀, in X59, no. 1085, 351a). The TDMY, on the other hand, bestows only *samaya* precepts 三昧耶戒, esoteric precepts whose precise content is not detailed in the TDMY but which the manual nevertheless strictly differentiates from the precepts typically received by human followers of the Buddha. See TDMY, fasc. 3, 33b-34a. This esoteric precept bestowal is accomplished solely through the recitation of mantras, which instantaneously allow the recipients to ascend to the ranks of the buddhas.

unfortunately, since the Joseon manuals seem to follow rites of summoning associated with other traditions of performing the Water-Land Retreat, they do little to clarify such discrepancies between Zhipan's and Zhuhong's recensions. At the very least, however, the existence of these Korean manuals that so confidently proclaim themselves to be "Zhipan's manual" indicates that no recension of the Water-Land Retreat liturgy is necessarily what it claims to be. Moreover, their existence also points to intriguing questions about the circulation of various versions of the ritual. While scholars have long assumed that Zhipan's recension circulated only near Ningbo—indeed, Zhuhong himself subscribed to this notion⁸¹—, these Korean manuals clearly suggest that such an idea must be reevaluated.⁸² The wide circulation of ostensibly regional variants of the Water-Land Retreat—a phenomenon that may well raise questions about the validity of privileging local histories of Buddhist practice over empire-wide, or interregional, narratives in the Song and after—is a theme that we will revisit throughout the following chapters.

Cosmic Modularity: Ming and Qing Variants

From the above discussion of the canonical practice of the Water-Land Retreat, it is clear that the ritual possesses decidedly cosmic pretensions. It can, for example, embrace any being, regardless of religious affiliation, and convert it to into something Buddhist. Similarly, it can embrace other Buddhist texts and rites and fit them into an ever-adaptable and -expandable Outer Altar. The ritual exists, in a sense, as modular framework waiting to be filled in and replicated. Thus, we might speculate that the ritual is, at its heart, little more than a very basic performative syntax—a simple structure, paired with simple compositional principles, that can be adapted,

⁸¹ On the supposedly limited circulation of the text, see Zhuhong's comments in FJSF, fasc. 6, 823a.

⁸² Interestingly, it seems that the Korean court sponsored the printing of at least three different Water-Land liturgies in 1470, thus raising further questions about the circulation of ritual texts, and the dominance of particular variants of the liturgy, at the time.

developed, expanded, or contracted according to the needs of the ritual sponsors and officiants.⁸³ Some of these simple performative elements are common to all Chinese Buddhist rituals, which fundamentally follow the Vedic “guest-host model” of ritual practice; this model—essentially that of inviting a guest to a feast—involves purifying and securing both the ritual site and the ritualist, summoning the deity, presenting offerings, and sending the deity back to his place in the cosmos.⁸⁴ To this long-standing foundational model, the Water-Land Retreat adds the distinctly Mahayana elements of the repentance of transgressions and the recitation of vows to aid all sentient beings, as well as more Esoteric elements such as the use of mantras and dhāraṇīs to liberate the denizens of Hell. Viewed at this level of abstraction, the Water-Land Retreat is little different from any other Chinese Buddhist ritual. However, it radically expands the scale of these actions. During the course of its performance, the ritual invokes and fêtes *all* classes of Buddhist deities; further, it summons *all* non-awakened beings in the cosmos, ranging from the most exalted bureaucrats of the Daoist celestial realm to the wandering spirits of the local dead. It is, quite simply, the grandest expression of Mahayana universalism in the Chinese Buddhist liturgical repertoire.

More importantly, the ritual insists on the bathing of those beings and the bestowal of Buddhist precepts on them, as well as the sending of those spirits to be reborn in Amitābha’s Western Pure Land. Further, it is a ritual that constantly refers to itself, that constantly reminds its participants of its orthodoxy and its history. As we saw above, ten mytho-historical figures

⁸³ Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 48, makes a similar suggestion, though in a somewhat more measured manner. To reach this conclusion, Stevenson relies largely on Ming and Qing accounts of the ritual, as well as on a brief analysis of the differences between the manual compiled by Zhipan and Zhuhong and the Korean variants of the TDMY.

⁸⁴ On this model, particularly as it applies to Esoteric Buddhist ritual, see Robert Sharf, “Thinking through Shingon Ritual,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26, no. 1 (2003): 51-96. For references to foundational scholarship on the topic, see *ibid.*, 58, n. 13.

involved in the composition of the Water-Land liturgy are venerated at one of the ten stations of the Upper Hall in every performance of the ritual. Moreover, every ritual performance includes multiple homilies on the history of the ritual, further reminding practicants of its ostensibly continuous, unbroken descent from the distant Indian and Chinese Buddhist pasts.⁸⁵

And yet, despite the ritual's claim to seemingly immutable orthodoxy, Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual itself acknowledges that the ritual can be adapted—that is, expanded and contracted—according to the needs of the sponsor. The very first line of the manual, which includes instructions for the preparation of the ritual site, mentions that “if [the ritual] is to be [performed] in a monastery [as opposed to a lay residence], then the Sponsor should arrive in advance 若在伽藍中，施主宜先期預至”⁸⁶; several lines below, Zhuhong then goes on to indicate that certain mantras should be recited to invoke the protection of the Monastery Guardian, while others should be recited to summon the House God if the ritual is being held in a private residence.⁸⁷ This ritual is, in other words, far more mutable than the term “ritual,” which carries with it connotations of unchanging practice and unbroken tradition, might imply.

Significantly, there exists much more extensive textual proof for this observation about the mutability of the Water-Land Retreat—and for this speculation that the ritual has long existed more as a schematic grammar than as completely unified program. This is to be found in manuals for various other methods of performing the ritual—methods contemporaneous to, yet differing markedly from, Zhuhong's canonical version—that survive in Ming-, Qing-, and Joseon-dynasty woodblock-printed editions from various regions of China and Korea. None of

⁸⁵ See FJSF, fasc. 2, 796b, for a brief history of the ritual recited immediately after the invocation of the ten masters of the Water-Land Retreat, and *ibid.*, 797b-798c.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, fasc. 1, 784b.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 784b-784c.

these variant liturgies was ever included in an officially sponsored Buddhist canon, but their existence proves, at the very least, that a number of distinct regional variations in methods of performing the Water-Land Retreat once existed.⁸⁸ Moreover, as the material I will discuss below indicates, and as Daniel Stevenson has previously speculated, these materials suggest that from its very beginning, the Water-Land Retreat existed as a field of contestation among different ritualists, all of whose differing approaches to ritual practice could be accommodated within the more general construct of this malleable, all-embracing liturgy.

The “Northern” Water-Land Retreat

Perhaps the best-known of these variant manuals is entitled the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* 天地冥陽水陸儀文 (*Manual for the Ritual of All Beings of Heaven and Earth, This World and the Netherworld, and Water and Land*), which was first described by the Japanese historian of religion (especially Daoism) Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豊 in the 1950s. Although the text received brief attention from Daniel Stevenson and Henrik Sørensen in the 1990s, it was not the subject of any sustained scholarly inquiry until the past decade.⁸⁹ Closely related copies of the

⁸⁸ Scholars have long noted passages in Song-dynasty Buddhist encyclopedias like the *Fozu tongji* and the *Shimen zhengtong*, as well as in texts by scholars like Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), that point to the existence of regional variants, which I, too, will discuss in Chapters 1.2 and 1.3. See, for example, Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 35-36. Ibid., 40, further points to the tension that once existed among these variant ritual traditions. However, in the decade since the publication of Stevenson’s prescient essay, a greater diversity of regional practices than had hitherto been documented has come to light, thus necessitating the descriptive account that follows.

⁸⁹ The TDMY proper consists of three fascicles; two fascicles entitled *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zawen* 天地冥陽水陸雜文 (*Miscellaneous Texts for the Ritual of All Beings of Heaven and Earth, This World and the Netherworld, and Water and Land*); and a fascicle entitled *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwén (tantu shi)* 天地冥陽水陸儀文 壇圖式 (*Manual for the Ritual of All Beings of Heaven and Earth, This World and the Netherworld, and Water and Land [Model Altars and Diagrams]*). For the sake of convenience, I refer to all six fascicles as the TDMY. I indicate the three main fascicles simply by fascicle number; I refer to the “Miscellaneous Texts” fascicles as “Zawen,” fascicles one and two; and I cite the “Model Altars and Diagrams” fascicle as “Tantu shi.” Stevenson surveys the TDMY briefly in *ibid.*, 35-36. He seems largely to rely on a Korean variant of the text, as well as the description of the text in Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豊, “Chūgoku ni okeru Mikkyō shinkō 中国における密教信仰,” in *idem*, *Dōkyō to Bukkyō* 道教と仏教 (Tokyo: Nihon gakujutsu shinkōkai, 1959), vol. 1, 369-411, esp. 406-408 and 424. Hou Chong has summarized the contents of the TDMY in Hou Chong, *Yunnan Azhali jiao*, 51-69. More recently, Hou

manual are held in the Gest Collection of the East Asian Library at Princeton University, in the National Library 國家圖書館 in Beijing, as well as in several other collections in China, Japan, Korea, and the United States; essentially identical in the vision of the ritual that they present, these various copies differ slightly in the precise structuring of that content, as Hou Chong 侯冲 and others have shown in their rigorous comparisons of the copies.⁹⁰ The extant recension of the *Tiandi mingyang shuiliu yiwen* seems to have been compiled in Shanxi Province in the early decades of the Ming dynasty by the monk Yijin 義金 (act. ca. 1368-1424).⁹¹ Yijin most likely based his manual on an earlier text that postdated the Northern Song dynasty and that found great popularity under the Jurchen Jin (1115-1234) dynasty.⁹² Yijin's manual seems to have circulated widely, especially in northern China and Korea.

presented a conference paper on the manual, in which he argues that the manual compiled by the monk Zongze 宗蹟 (act. ca. 1100) in 1096 likely served as the general model for the TDMY, a conclusion that I also reached when first writing this chapter in January 2011. Hou's essay also includes important epigraphical data that speaks to the circulation of the text, or its predecessor, during the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234). See idem, "Hongji zhi fanyi." I thank Prof. Hou for kindly sharing a copy of his paper with me. Dai Xiaoyun has analyzed the text in Dai, 28-49. She summarizes the differences between the Beijing and Princeton copies of the manual in *ibid.*, 45-46. A number of related manuals that survive from Joseon-period Korea are surveyed in Henrik H. Sørensen, "A Bibliographical Survey of Buddhist Ritual Texts from Korea," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 6 (1991-1992): 172-175. Two fascicles of the "Miscellaneous Texts 雜文" section of a 1655 Korean manual are held in the collection of the Harvard-Yenching Library (Rare Book TK 1846 1477), a digitized version of which is available at <<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/7570879?n=1>>. The Harvard copy includes a selection of altar diagrams, as well as various model texts to be employed during the performance of the rite. A similar version has been published as *Cheonji myeongyang suryuk japmun* 天地冥陽水陸雜文, in HG, vol.1, 499-571. Importantly, some of the related Korean manuals include liturgies for abbreviated performances of the rite, including one-, three-, and five-day versions.

⁹⁰ The copy of the TDMY in the Gest Collection of the East Asian Library at Princeton University (manuscript number TC513/3780) has been digitized and is available at <<http://eastasianlib.princeton.edu/diglib.php>>. This is the only complete six-fascicle copy of the manual, and it is to it that I refer, as I have not examined the copies in Chinese and Japanese collections. Differences among those copies are discussed in Hou Chong, *Yunnan Azhali jiao*, 51-69; and Dai, 28-49, esp. 28-31 and 44-46.

⁹¹ See *Shanxi tongzhi* 山西通志, compiled by Jueluo shilin 覺羅石麟 (act. early 18th century), 1734, fasc. 159, 11b-12a; SKQS edition. Cited in Hou Chong, "Hongji zhi fanyi," 16.

⁹² See Hou Chong, "Hongji zhi fanyi," and Dai, 28-36.

Viewed from a high level of abstraction, the basic structure of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* differs little from Zhipan and Zhuhong's *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui*, though many differences are to be found in the finer details of ritual performance and in their structuring of the pantheon summoned. Most obviously and most generically, however, whereas Zhipan and Zhuhong's text emphasizes a Tiantai approach to ritual, quoting extensively from Zhiyi and Zhili, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* seems to emphasize a somewhat more Esoteric viewpoint, something seen especially in its extensive quotation of Esoteric texts in the sections of the liturgy related to food bestowal and precept bestowal.⁹³ Further, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* seems to have been conceived as a three-day ritual.⁹⁴

The manual begins with a complete mytho-history of the origin of the Water-Land Retreat, as well as a discourse on the import of the ritual and its title. The mytho-history of the ritual is meant to be inscribed on a placard displayed throughout the performance of the ritual, reminding all participants and observers of the orthodox origins of the ritual that they are performing.⁹⁵ This mytho-history will be treated extensively in the following chapter. The text

⁹³ See especially TDMY, fasc. 3, 16a-34a. For example, rather than bestowing the more typical five lay precepts or ten bodhisattva precepts, the TDMY bestows *samaya* precepts, which are more exclusively associated with the Esoteric tradition. Certainly, the very existence of an "Esoteric" "school" or "tradition" has been an issue of intense scholarly debate in the past two decades. I do not mean to suggest that the TDMY was produced by such a school; nevertheless, in comparison to the FJSF, the TDMY does seem to quote more consistently from Tang-dynasty Esoteric sources translated by Amoghavajra 不空 (705-774), as Dai Xiaoyun has already discussed throughout her *Shuiluhua yanjiu*, just as the CGSL quotes more extensively from Huayan 華嚴 sources than do the other texts (as we shall see below). The implications of these patterns in the citation of sectarian sources deserve further research.

⁹⁴ See, for example, TDMY, "Zawen 雜文," fasc. 1, 12b. The model documents included in the "Miscellaneous Texts" typically include a passage wherein the beginning and ending dates of the ritual are specified, as is the precise number of days over which the performance takes places; in some cases, it is directly specified that that it is a three-day ritual. For example, the "Qielan tudi [shu] 伽藍土地[疏]" ("[Statement] to the Monastery-Guarding Earth God"), in TDMY, "Zawen," fasc. 2, 2b, allows the copyist to specify the number of days over which the ritual is conducted (as indicated by the phrase, "*gong ji zhouye* 共幾晝夜"); whereas the "Yubao chenghuang zhenzai 預報城隍真宰" ("[Statement] to Alert the Perfected Officer of City Walls and Moats"), in *ibid.*, 4b, specifies that the ritual will be performed over a total of three days and nights (*zong san zhouye* 揔三晝夜).

⁹⁵ TDMY, "Zawen," fasc. 1, 3a-4b.

for the performance of the ritual proper, however, begins with procedures for securing the ritual site. In this, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* parallels Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual, though the procedures by which the site is secured differ extensively. Notably, ritual implements and pure water are empowered, the arhat Pinḍola 賓頭盧 is summoned, as are the local City God 本郡城隍, the local wind and rain deities 當境風伯雨師, the local Earth God (Monastery Guardian) 伽藍土地, the Great Spirit of the Five Paths 五道大神, and the Retreat-Inspecting Messenger 監齋使者.⁹⁶ Banners are also hung. Upon the completion of these preparatory procedures, the Four Tally-Bearing Messengers 四直持符捷疾使者 are sent off to the ends of the cosmos to summon the myriad spirits, just as was true in Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy.⁹⁷ The compilers of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* expand this section of the liturgy, however, invoking the Emperors of the Five Directions 五方五帝 to open the paths along which the messengers and the summoned spirits will travel,⁹⁸ and empowering the Yellow Path 黃道 along which the saints 聖 will travel to take their places in the ritual space.⁹⁹ In invoking the Emperors of the Five Directions, the manual thus seems to imply a more bureaucratized vision of the cosmos—a vision that more fully embraces a model of the cosmos more closely associated with Daoism and state religion—than was implied by Zhipan and Zhuhong.

With these preparatory procedures completed, the rites of summoning begin. Unlike Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual, which divides the summoned spirits into dyadic Upper and Lower Halls, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* proposes a tripartite division of the cosmos.

⁹⁶ TDMY, fasc. 1, 7a-25b.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 25b-33a.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 33a-36a.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 36a-36b.

This cosmic model begins with the “upper 上” awakened 聖 beings—buddhas, bodhisattvas, *vidyārājas*, arhats, disciples, and dharma protectors 護法善神—¹⁰⁰, who are followed by the “middle 中” *devas* and immortals 天仙—that is, the celestial beings of the various heavens, astral and planetary deities, as well as the Daoist Three Primes 三元 and the four messengers, all of whom are led by the Bodhisattva of the Storehouse of Heaven 天藏王菩薩.¹⁰¹ The beings of the “lower realm 下界” are then summoned; led by the Bodhisattva Who Upholds the Earth 持地菩薩, these include Daoist figures such as Houtu shengmu 后土聖母 and the Imperial Sovereign of the Eastern Peak 東嶽帝君, as well as the gods of the Five Marchmounts 五嶽, various dragon kings 龍王, local gods, and water-dwelling spirits.¹⁰² Also included in this category are the *asuras*, Hāritī 訶利帝曆 and *rākṣasīs* 羅刹女, and the Three Great Generals 三大將軍; spirits summoned later in the ritual—notably, ghosts—can also be understood as belonging to this category. The tri-partite cosmic model adopted in this liturgy suggests that this version of the Water-Land Retreat derives from a different tradition of performance than that followed by Zhipan and Zhuhong; as will be discussed in the following chapter, these two traditions ultimately seem to have been codified in different regions of the Song empire at approximately the same time.

After having been summoned, these myriad spirits are all bathed.¹⁰³ Next, a series of rites is performed to more properly prepare the ritual space for the conversion of the remaining

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 37a-67a.

¹⁰¹ TDMY, fasc. 2, 6b-12a.

¹⁰² Ibid., 12a-18a.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 18a-19b.

polluted beings who are soon to be summoned; thus, a precept altar 戒壇 is established, the Lamp Altars of the Wheels of Heaven and Earth 天・地輪燈壇 are prepared, the Milky Sea 乳海 is opened, the Eight Trigram Altar 八卦壇 is established, models of the Earth Prisons 地獄 of Hell are prepared, the Golden Bridge 金橋 and Black Path 黑道 are established, as are several other pieces of equipment necessary for the freeing of Hell-denizens.¹⁰⁴

With this elaborate scenography properly prepared, the various spirits of the Netherworld are summoned.¹⁰⁵ First, Kṣitigarbha 地藏王菩薩 and the Ten Kings 十王 of Purgatory are invoked, followed by their various assistants, the Magistrate of Mt. Tai 泰山府君, and the various kings of the lesser hells. Next, Hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, and animals are called forth and bathed. The spirits of deceased family members, led by the Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva 引路王菩薩, are then summoned, bathed, and clothed.¹⁰⁶ These are followed by various deceased people of the past 往古人倫, including figures ranging from members of the imperial family to filial sons and daughters, as well as monks and nuns.¹⁰⁷ They, too, are led by the Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva and are bathed and seated. Next, the wandering souls 無主孤魂 of people who suffered violent deaths 橫死 are called forth; as in Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual, these

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 19b-39a.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 39a-46b.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 46b-51b.

¹⁰⁷ TDMY, fasc. 3, 1a-5b. The text is broken midway through this section, and four pages pertaining to the summoning of deceased humans have been removed to the end of the manual (ibid., 48a-49b).

include everyone from soldiers who died in far-off lands to people who committed suicide.¹⁰⁸

They, too, are bathed, clothed, and led over the Golden Bridge to pay homage to the saints.¹⁰⁹

After these rites of summoning have been completed, the ritual turns its attention to food bestowal 施食, which takes place before the Seven Tathāgatas 七如來 associated with such rites at least from the time of Amoghavajra 不空 (705-774) onward.¹¹⁰ Sins are repented,¹¹¹ offerings are presented and accepted,¹¹² and Esoteric *samaya* precepts are bestowed.¹¹³ Ultimately, preparations are made to send the newly converted spirits to be reborn in the Pure Land,¹¹⁴ and the ritual concludes with vivid descriptions of the various spirits returning to their abodes.¹¹⁵ The same basic acts found in Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual are thus all present: it remains a ritual of universal salvation meant to bring succor particularly to the wandering ghosts of the rancorous dead. As we have seen, however, a number of differences between the two rituals are to be found in the precise structure of certain acts in the liturgy, in the structuring of the ritual space, and in the structuring and identity of the pantheons summoned.

¹⁰⁸ Because of the reordering of the aforementioned four pages manual, this section begins on what should be *ibid.*, 48b. It then continues on *ibid.*, 6a-12b.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 12b-15b.

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, 16a-19b. These buddhas include Tathāgata Treasured Greatness 寶勝如來, Tathāgata Fearless 離怖畏如來, Tathāgata Vast Body 廣博身如來, Tathāgata Exquisitely Hued Body 妙色身如來, Tathāgata Abundant Treasures 多寶如來, Amitābha Tathāgata 阿彌陀如來, and Tathāgata Brilliant Vast Power of the World 世間廣大威德自在光明如來. This section of the manual seems to come directly from *Yujia jiyao jiu Anan tuoluoni yankou guiyi jing* 瑜伽集要救阿難陀羅尼焰口軌儀經, translated by 不空 Amoghavajra (705-774), in T21, no. 1318, 470c-471b.

¹¹¹ TDMY, fasc. 3, 19b-22b.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 23a-28b.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 28b-34a.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34a-43b.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34a-47b.

Unlike the extant recension of Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual, which contains solely the instructions for performing the rites of the Inner Altar, many copies of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* include three further fascicles of supplementary material essential to the performance of the rite; similar such material is only included in later Qing-dynasty expansions of Zhipan and Zhuhong's text.¹¹⁶ Two of the additional fascicles in the *Tiandi mingyan shuilu yiwen*—which are simply entitled “Miscellaneous Texts 雜文”—consist of model documents to be employed when summoning the various spirits and when establishing various spaces within the ritual enclosure. These “memorials 表,” “mandates 牒,” and “statements 疏”¹¹⁷ of summoning are to be copied, dated, and signed, and then burned when the spirits are called down; the placards 榜 for the various ritual paraphernalia are to be copied, dated, and signed, and posted beside the implements. Buddhist ritual is made bureaucratic to a seemingly unprecedented degree, a topic taken up in Part 3 of this dissertation. Further, the final fascicle of the manual includes diagrams for laying out various altars, as well as schematic drawings of various ritual paraphernalia such as the Golden Bridge, the models of the Earth Prisons, and the Milky Sea.¹¹⁸ Talismans to be used seal the ritual site in all five directions are also included,¹¹⁹ as is a diagram of an “Altar of Bhaiṣajyaguru's Assembly 藥師[佛]會壇,”¹²⁰ which is mentioned

¹¹⁶ See, especially, SLYGHB, fasc. 4, 22a-47b, 137-149; and Zhixu, *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun*, fasc. 1, 829a-831b.

¹¹⁷ While the term “*shu* 疏” more typically refers to commentaries on canonical texts such as sutras, or to a particular genre of memorial to the imperial court, in the context of ritual performances, it refers to a short work of parallel prose, typically written by the sponsor of the performance or by a lettered man writing on behalf of that sponsor, that generally outlines the benefits sought through the performance and, perhaps, the circumstances surrounding the performance. These privately written statements may well have been inserted into longer model statements of the type outlined in TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 2.

¹¹⁸ See TDMY, “Tantu shi 壇圖式,” 1a-12a, and 15a-15b.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 12b-14b.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 15b.

nowhere else in the text, thus suggesting that it may be part of an “Outer Altar” not treated in the main manual itself. Importantly for art historians, the end of this fascicle includes a list of one hundred twenty spirits, which are divided into “left 左” and “right 右” groups of sixty deities each, and which presumably would be arrayed around buddhas and bodhisattvas placed at center—an invaluable list for identifying the deities depicted in a vast corpus of paintings from the Ming and Qing dynasties.¹²¹

The diagrams appended to the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* confirm what is suggested in the main body of the manual: rather than following Zhipan and Zhuhong’s bi-partite division of summoned spirits—placing Buddhist deities in the rear, hierarchically superior, Upper Hall of the ritual space, and placing the non-Buddhist spirits in the front, yet inferior, space of the Lower Hall—the practitioners of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* summon the spirits to a series of three radially configured altars, which are to be constructed of three layers of packed earth and which are arrayed at different, hierarchically ordered locations within the ritual enclosure.¹²² In accordance with the radial configuration of these square and circular altars, the most important deities are presumably represented by name tablets 神位 placed in the center facing each cardinal direction, and other deities, also embodied in tablets, are then arranged in concentric, descending tiers around them (Figure 1.5).¹²³ As Dai Xiaoyun has pointed out, this arrangement closely

¹²¹ For the full list of spirits, see Appendix 1 of this dissertation.

¹²² The specification that the altar should be constructed of three layers of packed earth also recalls Daoist methods of altar construction. For an introduction to Daoist altar construction, see Tanaka Fumio 田中文雄, “Girei no kūkan 儀礼の空間,” in *Dōkyō no kyōdan to girei 道教の教団と儀礼*, edited by Tanaka Fumio 田中文雄 et al., vol. 2 of *Kōza Dōkyō 講座道教* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku shuppan, 2000), 91-115. Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 57, and 69, n. 115, include discussions of some of the differences in altar configuration between the northern and southern practices of the rite; these discussions suggest the much more open, almost sprawling character of the northern Water-Land Retreat’s ritual enclosure.

¹²³ Altar diagrams are included in TDMY, “Tantu shi,” 1a-b, 3a-4b, and 7b.

imitates that of the Diamond World Mandala 金剛界曼荼羅 commonly used in Esoteric Buddhist rituals, especially in the Japanese Shingon 真言 and Tendai 天台 schools.¹²⁴ Dai argues that this manual for the “northern” version of the Water-Land Retreat can be used to identify the deities depicted in many Water-Land murals and hanging scrolls from the Ming and, to a certain extent, Qing dynasties. Most of these works survive in the northern Chinese provinces of Shanxi and Hebei. Many of the murals, such as that at Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), discussed extensively in Chapter 2.1 of this dissertation, make clear use of a tri-partite structure to array the deities depicted; meanwhile, the cartouches used to identify the deities included in sets of hanging scrolls, prints, and even relief carvings correspond precisely to the list of one hundred twenty spirits included in the fascicle of altar diagrams. While Dai has convincingly shown the relevance of this manual for interpreting Ming- and Qing-dynasty works, Hou Chong more recently has uncovered epigraphic evidence that a set of one hundred twenty hanging scrolls depicting a pantheon divided among three primary classes was being used for the performance of the *Tiandi mingyang shuiliu zhai* at the Jianfu yuan 建福院 in Yu County 孟縣, Shanxi Province, as early as 1164, during the Jurchen Jin dynasty.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Dai, 40.

¹²⁵ See “Da Jin guo Hedong beilu Taiyuan fu Yu xian Baitu po Jianfu yuan ji 大金國河東北路太原府孟縣白土坡建福院記,” in *San Jin shike daquan • Yangquan shi Yu xian juan* 三晉石刻大全 • 陽泉市孟縣卷, edited by Li Jingming 李晶明 (Taiyuan: San Jin chubanshe, 2010), 19; and Li Yumin 李裕民 and Zheng Guanrun 鄭關潤, “Yu xian Jianfu yuan de Jin dai beike 孟縣建福院的金代碑刻,” *Wenwu shijie* 文物世界, no. 1 (1989): 91, transcribed in Hou Chong, “Hongji zhi fanyi,” 14. Rather exceptionally, this stele lists *all* of the sculpted icons, mural paintings, and scroll paintings—a total of more than 350 works—contained within the various halls of this cloister, as well as the dimensions of the buildings. The “Water-Land Hall 水陸殿,” which contained an image of a White-Robed Guanyin 白衣觀音 surrounded by the Bodhisattvas Sūryaprabha 日光菩薩 and Candraprabha 月光菩薩, seems to have been the largest hall in the monastery at thirteen bays 十三間. Interestingly, too, the stele shows that images of Śākyamuni, Laozi, and Confucius were venerated together in a “Hall of the Three Great Masters 三大士堂.” While it is not uncommon to list the sculptures or murals within a particular temple hall in stele texts recording the construction of such a structure, I have never come across another stele that listed all of the portable paintings owned by a monastery.

Further, in reflecting on this manual, Dai Xiaoyun has suggested a prudent approach to the issue of the seeming “syncretism” of the Water-Land Retreat, arguing that by incorporating deities from various religious traditions into the space of this Buddhist ritual, the officiants of the ritual are essentially seeking to convert, or Buddhicize, all beings in the cosmos, from the highest Daoist deities to the lowliest of local ghosts.¹²⁶ One must wonder, however, whether lay worshippers would necessarily have interpreted the ritual proceedings in the same way as the officiants. It seems quite possible that these acts of conversion on the part of monastic officiants might well have been construed by lay worshippers as acts of venerating the spirits with which they interacted in their local communities; after all, offerings are universally presented to all spirits summoned during the ritual.¹²⁷ In other words, the meaning or import of the ritual may well have differed for the rite’s various audiences. Indeed, I would further suggest that the Shibi si stele discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation, which provides one of the few extant direct descriptions (and not *prescriptions*) of a non-elite performance of the Water-Land Retreat, indicates that different audiences of the ritual could, potentially, conceive of it in radically different ways. While the stele does not reveal how the audience *received* the ritual performance, it does indicate that these lay people, and the ritualist that they invited to perform the liturgy, decided to emphasize the veneration of Daoist deities. Rather than converting those deities into followers of the Buddha as would be more typical in a performance of the Water-Land Retreat, the members of the community at Shibi si seem to have focused on worshipping those deities, even making use of rites taken directly from Daoist ritual practice. If such acts were, as is likely,

¹²⁶ See especially Dai, 102-124.

¹²⁷ A line from the nineteenth-century *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun* seems to suggest just such a parity among the non-Buddhist spirits summoned during the rite. It notes that the ritual “unites [all beings] of water, land, and air, liberating them without limit; and it joins immortals, Confucians, and children of the Buddha, fusing them into one 統水陸虛空而度脫無邊，合仙儒佛子而銷鎔一際.” See *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun*, fasc. 1, in X74, no. 1498, 829b.

conscious decisions on the part of the community—or on the part of whoever first initiated the tradition of performance that they followed—, this would seem to suggest that worshippers could adapt the ritual to their own ends based on their individual needs and on their individual vision of the import of the liturgy.

Finally, in considering the differences between the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* and the liturgy compiled by Zhipan and Zhuhong, we might note that the different constituent sections of the former present a very different vision of how the genre of the “liturgical manual” might be conceived. On the one hand, thanks to its inclusion of model documents and altar diagrams, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* serves as decidedly practical guide to the performance of the ritual; it gives the reader/worshipper/practicant models of all of the materials—written, oral, and material—that he needs to perform the ritual, in much the same manner as Yirun’s *Huiben* does. On the other hand, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* does not consistently differentiate among the tasks that are to be performed by different members of the entourage of ritual officiants—something that Zhipan and Zhuhong’s manual treats much more explicitly; the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* thus feels as though it provides a more singular, monolithic narrative of the ritual, whereas Zhipan and Zhuhong’s manual reads more like the multi-vocal script for a play. Although these two texts ostensibly belong to the same textual genre, they reveal that the boundaries of this genre are decidedly malleable, even when treating the same general ritual construct. This observation, in turn, raises questions about the audiences for which these two manuals were composed. Neither manual is complete enough to allow a reader/worshipper to perform the liturgy without supplementary instruction from someone with practical, experiential knowledge of the ritual. Nevertheless, by including such an extensive array of model texts and liturgical diagrams, does the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* imply a move toward obviating the

need for the esoteric transmission of performative knowledge from master to disciple implied by the comparatively terse instructions found in Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual? Has esoteric knowledge become democratized, open to monks, or even laypeople, who might lack a master to instruct them directly in the performance of the ritual?

Dating of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*

Before leaving behind the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, some consideration of the dating, and even the internal consistency of the manual, is necessary, as these two issues raise intriguing questions regarding the process by which a ritual manual is compiled. The Princeton copy of the manual bears no indication of its date of publication, and the catalogue of the Princeton collection suggests simply that it was printed in Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, during the Ming dynasty¹²⁸; the first fascicle of the copy in the National Library of China, which differs only slightly from the Princeton version in terms of the ordering and naming of certain acts in the liturgy, includes an endsheet indicating that it was printed in Taiyuan in 1520, while a sheet in the first fascicle of the manual's "Miscellaneous Texts" indicates that it was reprinted in 1522. A fragmented early-fifteenth-century copy of the manual also survives in Japan.¹²⁹ It seems likely, then, that all extant Chinese copies of this manual were printed in northern China between the fifteen and sixteenth centuries. However, this chronology is somewhat controverted by a statement in the first fascicle of the "Miscellaneous Texts" included in several copies of these manuals. Here we find a "Preface 序" composed in 1303 by the monk Wuwei Weida 無外

¹²⁸ *Pulinsidun daxue Geside dongfang tushuguan zhongwen jiuji shumu* 普林斯頓大學葛思德東方圖書館中文舊籍書目 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1990), 487. Cited in Dai, 28, and Hou Chong, *Yunnan azhali jiao*, 52.

¹²⁹ Hou Chong, 52; Dai, 30.

惟大 (act. ca. 1300) of Jianyan si 薦巖[嚴]寺 in Kunshan 昆山, Pingjiang 平江,¹³⁰ which indicates that he appended these model texts to the ritual manual first printed by the Chan Master Xuetao Zongtong 雪堂揔[總]統禪師 (act. late thirteenth century to early fourteenth century), a prominent Yuan-dynasty Linji 臨濟 monk very active in the publishing of Buddhist texts.¹³¹ It seems likely, then, that the extant Ming manuals may correspond quite closely to manuals employed during the Yuan dynasty.

The internal consistency of the manual itself, however, suggests that the manual may not be as unified as the term “manual” might suggest. Although it appears to be a self-contained whole, certain choices in formatting and, especially, certain turns of phrase suggest that the manual may be somewhat of a pastiche of earlier materials. We might note, for example, differences in the ways in which mantras and *dhāraṇīs* are introduced in the text. Throughout most of the manual, the phrase “the Storehouse of the Teachings of the Tathāgata contains [the following mantra] 如來教藏有” is typically used to introduce such spells; periodically, a shorter phrase—“my Tathāgata has 我如來有”—is also employed. However, in the middle of the third fascicle—that is, from the section on “Summoning to Repent Transgressions 召罪懺悔” onward—some mantras are no longer so introduced; rather, their title is simply given, followed in some cases by the character “yue 曰,” or “says.”¹³² I wonder, then, whether this indicates that

¹³⁰ See TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 1, 1a. Although Wuwei is said to be a monk of Jianyan si 薦巖寺 in the Princeton copy of this text, this seems to be a misprinting of “Jianyan si 薦嚴寺,” which is used in other versions, such as the 1531 Korean edition published as *Cheonji myeongyang suryuk japmun* 天地冥陽水陸雜文, fasc. 1, 1b, in HG, vol. 1, 502. Moreover, some of Wuwei’s other works, such as his preface to the *Chanyuan zhuquan jibu* 禪源諸詮集都, compiled by Zongmi 宗密 (784-841), fasc. 1, in T48, no. 2015, 397b, notes that he resides in this second Jianyan si 薦嚴寺.

¹³¹ Dai, 32-34.

¹³² See TDMY, fasc. 3, 20b ff.

this section of the manual was appropriated from a source text different from that of the rest of the manual.

More intriguingly and significantly, variations in the structuring of the pantheon summoned can also be noted. While the manual most frequently refers to a tri-partite division of the spirits summoned,¹³³ a binary structuring of the pantheon is also mentioned. In the *gāthās* associated with the Lamp Altar of the Heaven Wheel, the ritualist tells us that he

uses the boundless light of the dharma wheel
to present universal offerings before the main eight seats

我以法輪無盡燈 正八位前普供養,¹³⁴

and at Lamp Altar of the Earth Wheel, he

uses the boundless light of the dharma wheel
to make offerings to all before the lower eight seats

我以法輪無盡燈 下八位前皆供養.¹³⁵

The text thus seems to suggest the confusion of two different traditions—one bipartite, the other tripartite—of structuring the ritual space for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. As I will argue in Chapter 1.3, these traditions ultimately can be traced back to the Song dynasty, and specifically to the brief period of time between 1071 and 1096, when two different traditions of structuring the pantheon of the Water-Land Retreat were codified. The originator of the tradition of the bi-partite altar, the Sichuanese layman Yang E 楊諤 (1032-1098), is actually cited as the *author* of the second fascicle of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, which ends with a line

¹³³ See, for example, TDMY, fasc. 3, 16a: “Today, we assembly the myriad mundane and saintly [spirits], which are each hierarchically ordered. The foremost places are those of the myriad buddhas, saints, and sages; the middle places are those of the saintly assemblies of the *devas* and immortals; and the lowest places are those of the gods and spirits of water and land. 今者集諸凡聖，各有等差。首位則諸佛聖賢，中位則天仙聖眾，下則水陸神祇。”

¹³⁴ TDMY, fasc. 2, 28a.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 29b.

proclaiming this fascicle to be the “Middle Fascicle of the Water-Land Manual of Yang E of Eastern Sichuan 東川楊諤水陸儀文卷中.”¹³⁶ This bold claim, which attempts to link this Ming-dynasty manual to the earliest codified version of the Water-Land Retreat, may well be a disingenuous ploy intended to lend an air of orthodoxy to the later recension, for Yang E strictly maintained a bi-partite altar division in his manual, while the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* generally adheres more closely to a tri-partite altar structure. It seems, then, that this liturgy and this manual are perhaps less unified, and less orthodox, than they might initially have appeared. Although sources do not survive to give us a concrete picture of how the manual was compiled, we can imagine that the authors of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* freely copied from various sources, including Yang E’s manual, a contemporaneous Song manual making use of the tri-partite altar structure, manuals for the performance of related rites such as Amoghavajra’s prescriptions for the bestowal of food to hungry ghosts, etc. The result is a superficially coherent text whose many appropriations and pastiches become clear through close attention to formatting and phrasing.

A Single-Night Variant

The modular character of the Water-Land Retreat in general—that is, its ability to be expanded or contracted at will, without the loss of its basic functions and efficacies—can be clarified further through examination of an abbreviated, single-fascicle liturgy for the performance of single-night variant of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* that survive in several editions in library collections in Korea.¹³⁷ This manual, entitled *Suryuk mucha pyeongdeung jaeui jeyo* 水陸無遮平等齋儀提要 (*An Outline of the Manual for the Nondiscriminatory, Equal*

¹³⁶ TDMY, fasc. 2, 51b.

¹³⁷ See SR, 623-649.

Retreat of [All Beings] of Water and Land), was first published at the behest of the Joseon court in 1470 and was perhaps based on a Chinese original.¹³⁸ It is significantly condensed, reducing the ritual performance to only its essential acts—sealing the site, dispatching messengers, summoning the spirits of the three classes (upper, middle, and lower), bathing and clothing the polluted spirits, presenting offerings, explaining the basic tenets of Buddhist doctrine, repenting, bestowing the five lay precepts, and sending the spirits off. Somewhat strangely, the manual does not include an explicit account of sending the now-Buddhicized spirits to be reborn in the Pure Land, nor does it include an extensive account of the history of the ritual itself. Figurative imagery and instructions for meditative visualization are also all but absent.

Exceptionally, and unlike many other Water-Land manuals, this abbreviated liturgy includes illustrations of and instructions for performing the mudra associated with each mantra that is recited. In this manual, then, one of the most esoteric aspects of ritual performance—namely, the proper performance of mudras, something typically learned directly from one’s master, though also sometimes textually described (though not visually depicted) in manuals—is rendered public. Further, an abbreviated selection of “miscellaneous texts” is appended to the end of the fascicle, providing the minimum number of documents necessary to properly perform the ritual. Thanks both to this revelation of secret knowledge and to the highly abbreviated nature of the ritual proceedings recorded within the manual, it seems as though anyone who possessed this manual might be able to perform his own Water-Land Retreat. Indeed, one wonders whether sets of woodblock-printed icons of the deities summoned during the *Tiandi mingyang shuili zhai*, examples of which survive in both China and Japan, might not have been

¹³⁸ Although the manual survives only in Joseon editions, it seems to have been composed in China, as it refers to “all the peoples ... of the Middle Kingdom and foreign kingdoms in the Three Realms of the Ten Directions 十方三世中國外國 ... 一切人倫.” See SR, 18a, 631.

crafted with just such a variant of the ritual in mind.¹³⁹ Should a lay person possess both a copy of the abbreviated manual and a set of printed icons, why should he, too, not be able perform the ritual without the assistance of a monk? The existence of such a manual thus seems to suggest that, at least by the fifteenth century, the Water-Land Retreat was explicitly conceived as a basic performative grammar that could be adapted at will and that could, potentially, escape from the confines of the monastic establishment. As I will discuss in Chapter 1.3, this open conception of the Water-Land Retreat was not limited to later periods; as early as the Song dynasty, the malleable nature of this liturgical grammar was already readily apparent.

Reconceiving the Ritual in Yunnan

So far, we have examined two late-imperial variants of the Water-Land Retreat—one, Tiantai in orientation, and performed particularly in southern China (though in Korea, as well); the other, more Esoteric in tenor, and performed especially in northern China (and Korea). Yet a third regional and sectarian late-imperial variant of the ritual has recently become the object of increasing scholarly attention. In the southwestern Chinese province of Yunnan, the Yunnan Provincial Library 雲南省圖書館 in Kunming 昆明 holds an incomplete, late-fourteenth-century woodblock-printed text, which is entitled *Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai yi* 重廣水陸法施無遮大齋儀 (*Manual for the Expanded Nondiscriminatory Great Retreat of the Bestowal of the Dharma to [All Beings of] Water and Land*).¹⁴⁰ The liturgy detailed in this manual differs

¹³⁹ These woodblock prints are discussed in Chapter 2.1

¹⁴⁰ Hou Chong has dealt with this manual, a second copy of which is held in a private collection in Kunming, in several essays. See Hou Chong 侯冲, “Lun Dazu Baoding wei fojiao shuilu daochang 論大足寶頂為佛教水陸道場,” in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji 5* 大足石刻研究文集 5 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2005), 192-213; idem, “Zai lun Dazu Baoding wei fojiao shuilu daochang 再論大足寶頂為佛教水陸道場,” in *Kexue • xinyang, yu wenhua* 科學 • 信仰與文化, edited by Gao Huizhu 高惠珠 and Wang Jianping 王建平 (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2007), 296-312; idem, *Yunnan Azhali jiao*, 69-85, 338-341, and 346-348; and idem, “Shizhuan shan shike: diao zai shitou shang de shuilu hua,” vol. 1, 165-178. The Yunnan Provincial Library seems to be reticent to allow scholars to examine the manual. Hou Chong was allowed to study it for a month in 2004, during which time

significantly from both the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* and Zhipan and Zhuhong's canonical version, emphasizing a Huayan-oriented perspective on ritual performance different from the Esoteric and Tiantai perspectives of the other manuals. The fascicles of this manual that survive include the “Chongguang fashi shuilu dazhai tigang 重廣法施水陸大齋提綱” (“Outline of the Expanded Nondiscriminatory Great Retreat of the Bestowal of the Dharma to [All Beings of] Water and Land”), which presents an overview of the whole ritual; the “Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai jiaojie 重廣水陸法施無遮大齋教誡” (“Instructions and Admonitions for the Expanded Nondiscriminatory Great Retreat of the Bestowal of the Dharma to [All Beings] of Water and Land”), which records a series of warnings about proper performance of the ritual, as well as explicit instructions for the preparatory procedures; “juan wu 卷五” (“Fascicle Five”) and “juan liu 卷六” (“Fascicle Six”) of the “Chongguang shuilu wuzhe dazhai yi 重廣水陸無遮大齋儀” (“Manual for the Expanded Nondiscriminatory Great Retreat of the Bestowal of the Dharma to [All Beings of] Water and Land”), which contain instructions for the fifth and sixth periods of the ritual; and the “Shuilu dazhai yujia mijiao di yi tan 水陸大齋瑜珈密教第一壇” (“First Esoteric Yoga Altar of the Great Retreat of [All Beings of] Water and Land”), and the “Shuilu dazhai yujia mijiao di er tan 水陸大齋瑜珈密教第二壇” (“Second Esoteric Yoga Altar

he produced a complete transcription of the text, which he generously has shared with me. I am deeply indebted to his generosity. I visited the library in March 2010 but was only allowed to study the manual for three days. Despite the fragmented nature of the manual, the “Tigang 提綱” (“Outline”) fascicle gives an overview of the rite as a whole, allowing some understanding of how the rite differs from both the canonical and “northern” versions. Hou Chong, “Lun Dazu Baoding wei fojiao shuilu daochang”; idem, “Zai lun Dazu Baoding wei fojiao shuilu daochang”; and idem, “Shizhuan shan shike: diao zai shitou shang de shuilu hua,” all use sections of this manual to explicate the selection of deities and texts carved at various sites throughout Dazu County, including Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (“Stone Seal Mountain”) and the massive late-Song array of carved tableaux at Baoding shan 寶頂山 (“Treasure Summit Mountain”). In particular, Hou shows that a particular *gāthā* that appears in multiple variations at Baoding shan, several of which are not to be found verbatim anywhere in the official Buddhist canon, appears in this Water-Land manual. Due to the manual's fragmented condition, however, questions remain regarding the configuration of altars for the performance of this version of the ritual, and regarding the ways in which the sprawling sculptural niches at these grand rupestrian sites could possibly have played any active role in a ritual that seems to call for a strictly structured ritual enclosure and for more properly iconic representations of deities.

of the Great Retreat of [All Beings of] Water and Land”), two fascicles that consist almost solely of Esoteric *gāthās* and mantras to be recited at two altars that seem to correspond to the Upper and Lower Halls of Zhipan and Zhuhong’s liturgy.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, the extant manual does not include any altar diagrams to clarify the precise structure of the ritual space, though the fascicle that pertains to the Second Altar does include simple line drawings of the mudras that the officiant is to make as he recites certain mantras or performs other ritual actions. Although the manual is not complete, the extant text clearly shows that this liturgy makes use of the bi-partite pantheon structure that distinguishes Zhipan and Zhuhong’s liturgy from liturgies in the tradition of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*. As will be discussed in further detail in the following chapter, this division can ultimately be traced back to two regional variations in the performance of the rite in the Song dynasty, one more common in Sichuan and Zhejiang, and the other more common in Jiangsu and places further north.

The Yunnan liturgy consists of one hundred forty-four acts performed over the course of the six “periods 時” of the day.¹⁴² The manual begins with prefatory and preparatory procedures consisting of a series of homilies—and tales of warning—regarding the importance of performing the ritual with utmost purity, sincerity, and orthodoxy. These prefatory discourses also include a brief history of the ritual, a discussion of the qualifications and roles to be performed by the different ritualists, a discourse on offerings, and a discourse on spell-empowered water. Interestingly, the tales of warning about the proper performance of the ritual are set almost exclusively in Song-dynasty Sichuan, which has lead Hou Chong to speculate that

¹⁴¹ A fragmented copy of the instructions for the first altar, entitled “□□□□ wuzhe shuilu dazhai mijiao shang □□□□無遮水陸大齋密教上” (“Esoteric Teachings for the □□□□ Nondiscriminatory Great Retreat of [All Beings of] Water and Land, Fascicle One”) also survives.

¹⁴² CGSL, “Tigang,” 1b-2a.

this liturgy was composed in Sichuan and then brought to Yunnan, where its reprinting was sponsored by an otherwise-unknown official named Dong Lin 董琳 in Dali 大理¹⁴³ around 1379.¹⁴⁴ On this basis, Hou Chong has further argued for the correctness of the attributions of authorship printed at the beginning of the fascicle treating the prefatory rites, which suggests that a monk from Chengdu named Shixi 師習, who presumably lived during the Yuan dynasty, “reordered 編次” the manual composed by the famed Southern Song-dynasty Sichuanese monk Zujue 祖覺 (1087-1150), who “expanded 重廣” the manual composed by Yang E, the Northern Song layman who is generally acknowledged to have been the first systematizer of Water-Land practice in the Song.¹⁴⁵ The possible Song-dynasty Sichuanese origin of the manual is also suggested by citations of the imperially sponsored Kaibao 開寶 edition of the Tripiṭaka begun in 971 and printed in Sichuan.¹⁴⁶ Given that no other copies of this manual have been found

¹⁴³ The phrase “reverently printed and donated by Battalion Commander Dong Lin of Dali 大理千戶董琳敬刊施” appears on CGSL, “Juan wu,” 1a and 32b, as well as on CGSL, “Jiaojie,” 10a.

¹⁴⁴ The final, unnumbered page of CGSL, “Di er tan,” includes the following note: “Recorded on the first day of the first month of autumn [that is, the seventh month] of the *jiwei* year of the Hongwu era [1379] by Haiyun, a follower of the Lower Sanxue Monastery 三學下寺後人海雲誌 / 洪武己未年秋季月吉日記。”

¹⁴⁵ CGSL, “Jiaojie,” 1a: “Crafted by Emperor Gaozu of the Great Liang. Revised by Yang E of Huayin, the former Superior Grand Master of the Palace during the Song. Expanded by Zujue, master of the Deyun Retreat on Mt. Zhongyan in Meizhou. Re-ordered by Shixi of the Ganluxiang Altar of the Jiaoyuan Cloister [?] of Daci Monastery in Chengdu.

大梁高祖武皇帝御製。
宋故贈太中，大夫華陰，楊諤修撰。
眉州中巖山，德雲菴主，祖覺重廣。
成都大慈教源甘露霜壇，師習編次。”

¹⁴⁶ These citations are found accompanying mantras throughout the “First Altar” and “Second Altar” fascicles. For example, in CGSL, “Di er tan,” 38b, the “Fahu tuoluoni 法護陀羅尼” (“*Dhāraṇī* of Dharma Protection”) is said to come from the *Baoulouge jing* 寶樓閣經 (*Jeweled Tower Sutra*) in the section labeled with the character “*bei* 悲” in the version of the Tripiṭaka consulted by the compilers of the manual. Only the Kaibao Tripiṭaka, and the privately sponsored Jin-dynasty Zhaocheng 趙城 Tripiṭaka modeled on it, places this text (specifically, Bodhiruci’s 菩提流志 [?-727] translation of it—see T19, no. 1006) in the “*bei*” section of the Tripiṭaka. Unfortunately, I was not able to identify the source of all of the citations in the manual, but those that I did identify came from the Kaibao edition.

outside of Yunnan, it seems to represent a uniquely southwestern-Chinese regional variant of the Water-Land Retreat.

The ritual site is established during the morning of the first “period” of the ritual performance. To do so, as in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* liturgy, the arhat Piṇḍola¹⁴⁷ is summoned, offerings are presented to him, he is bathed, and he is given a seat in the hall¹⁴⁸; unlike in the other manual, however, it seems that Piṇḍola’s presence alone guarantees the security of the site here. Explicit instructions for the next four periods of the liturgy are missing. However, the “Outline” fascicle suggests that these acts should involve summoning the eight classes of spirits of both the First and Second Altars; lecturing on doctrinal fundamentals such as karma, saṃsāra, and dependent arising; praising the saints and admonishing the commoners; busting Hell; and lecturing on doctrinal fundamentals, including the Three Vehicles, the concept of universal buddha-nature, and the efficacy of certain mantras and sutras.¹⁴⁹ The content of the fifth and sixth periods, however, is fully documented in two extant fascicles. The fifth period primarily deals with eliminating past karmic bonds through various forms of repentance, the bestowal of lay Buddhist precepts, and the making of vows to attain *bodhicitta*.¹⁵⁰ The sixth

¹⁴⁷ Piṇḍola is one of the group of sixteen and eighteen arhats. An independent cult developed specifically around Piṇḍola, who was sometimes was invoked at the beginning of a ritual, seemingly to secure the ritual site. For an introduction to the deity, as well as references to recent scholarship on him, see Dang Yanni 党燕妮, “Wan Tang Wudai Song chu Dunhuang minjian fojiao xinyang yanjiu 晚唐五代宋初敦煌民间佛教信仰研究 [A Study of Popular Buddhist Belief in Late-Tang, Five Dynasties, and Early-Song Dunhuang],” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Lanzhou University, 2009, 155-165. Icons of Piṇḍola were also placed in the dining halls of Chinese Vinaya 律-school monasteries. See Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 14 and 80.

¹⁴⁸ CGSL, “Jiaojie,” 2a-10b, and 30a. The pages in this fascicle are, strangely, misnumbered.

¹⁴⁹ See CGSL, “Tigang.” Unfortunately, the pages of this fascicle are unnumbered.

¹⁵⁰ See CGSL, “Juan wu.”

period is concerned particularly with offerings both alimentary and spiritual, discussions of the Pure Land, and the dissolution of the ritual site after sending off the spirits.¹⁵¹

The basic contours of the ritual are little different from the variants that we have analyzed previously. Several important differences are to be noted, however. Like Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy, the Yunnan ritual also makes use of a binary division of the pantheon summoned; however, the number of classes of spirits summoned to each altar has been reduced to eight, placing the rite in line with Yang E's early-Song-dynasty variant of the ritual to be discussed in Chapter 1.3. Moreover, the vast hordes of wandering ghosts summoned in both Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy and in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* are conspicuously absent. Further, the Yunnan manual seems to be more insistently Huayan in orientation, repeatedly invoking the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 (*Avatamsaka Sutra*) and citing major passages from it; too, rather than taking Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, and Maitreya as the supramundane preceptors for the rites of precept bestowal, it instead summons Vairocana, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra 普賢—the “Three Huayan Saints 華嚴三聖”—to bestow the *bodhicitta* precepts 菩提心戒. The manual also seems to lack the intensely bureaucratic conception of the cosmos that undergirds the other manuals, especially the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*. While documents—notably, “statements”—are recited and burned periodically in the Yunnan liturgy, particularly when summoning deities, it lacks the various directional gods and guardians, as well as the various document-bearing messengers, that are so essential to securing the ritual sites within which the

¹⁵¹ See CGSL, “Juan liu.”

other rituals take place.¹⁵² Finally, acts of confession, repentance, and vowing specifically intended to eliminate karmic ties have come to take on a much larger role here.

Although the Yunnan manual is incomplete, in some ways, it provides us with the most complete understanding of how to perform the ritual that it describes; further, it provides us with the most complex picture of what a work in the genre of the “ritual manual” can be. The various extant fascicles all seem to be written for different ritual personnel—that is, each fascicle represents something like the score for a particular member of an orchestra, which only makes sense when read within the context of all other scores used in the performance. Indeed, the titles of the different fascicles largely correspond with the list of ritual personnel outlined in the second section of the “Admonitions” fascicle.¹⁵³ Here, we find an “Overseer 提剛[綱],” who is charged with “extracting the essentials [of the rite] 撮其義要;” it is for him, then, that the “Outline” fascicle—which contains an overview of all aspects of the ritual, as well as the short *gāthās* that he is to recite with other ritualists—was written. The “Extoller (or Cantor) 讚詠,” who “chants the Sanskrit sounds 唱以梵音,” presumably makes use of the fascicles on the “First” and “Second Esoteric Yoga Altars,” which consist almost exclusively of mantras and dhāraṇīs. Monks specifically charged with empowering water 咒水 and with establishing the altar 排壇 are also mentioned; we might imagine that given the comparatively limited nature of their roles, specific fascicles of the manual are not dedicated to them. Meanwhile, the content and structure of the “Admonitions” fascicle and the fascicles for the fifth and sixth periods of the ritual correspond more closely with what we might expect of a ritual manual given what we saw in the

¹⁵² Contemporary performances of the ritual make use of such documents, however, as the compilations of model texts surveyed in Hou Chong, *Yunnan Azhali jiao*, 220-84, clearly suggest.

¹⁵³ CGSL, “Jiaojie,” 11b-12a.

Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yiwen, the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, and the Korean manuals, providing a relatively high degree of detail about liturgical performance without enabling complete performance of the ritual and without being directed at any particular member of the ritual personnel. Somewhat oddly, however, none of the fascicles in the Yunnan manual include any mention of a “Ritual Master” or of specific visualizations to be performed, perhaps suggesting that such instructions might have been included in yet another lost fascicle of the work, or were transmitted orally.

Conclusion

The above survey has revealed that despite the contemporary dominance of Zhipan and Zhuhong’s canonical version of the Water-Land Retreat, multiple variants of the Water-Land Retreat have existed over the past six hundred years. They share similarities in their all-embracing, cosmic pretensions, yet in multiple respects—from the details of particular acts of the liturgy to the contents of the lists of deities invoked in each version of the ritual—are there to be found slight discrepancies among the liturgies. The configuration of the altars used in each variant differs even further. Consequently, it seems highly likely that throughout much of its history, the Water-Land Retreat existed as a highly malleable construct, one that could be molded and reconceived as necessary within certain broadly defined limits. Depending on the needs, means, or sectarian affiliations of the sponsors and officiants, the Water-Land Retreat could be radically reshaped while still remaining efficacious. Ritual, in other words, is never as conservative and immutable as its practitioners might have one believe. These general remarks about the nature of the ritual pertain equally to the genre of the “ritual manual” itself, whose form has never been fixed. Our comparison of the manuals surveyed in this chapter has revealed that the content and structure of the manuals themselves point to the inherent malleability of the

genre. These various visions of what a ritual manual can be in turn raise important questions about the intended audience for a given manual. Although not the primary interest of the present dissertation, the history of the late-imperial reception and use of such manuals represents an important field for future research on the Water-Land Retreat.

CHAPTER 1.2 | Beginnings: Histories and Mytho-Histories of the Water-Land Retreat

Introduction

Having established the diversity of the forms of the ritual as it was practiced in later periods, I now would like to step back further in time to see whether any of what we have determined about these later forms might prove true for earlier forms, as well. The early history of the ritual remains murky and has largely eluded scholarly reconstruction. However, the little that we do know suggests that from the beginning, the Water-Land Retreat was, in fact, defined by its malleability, by its existence as a simple paradigm that could easily be adapted to multiple ends and to multiple methods of performance. Despite claims to sixth century origins, the ritual most likely took shape in the late Tang, ultimately rising to empire-wide popularity in the Song thanks to several lay practitioners. As it evolved from prototypical forms into more mature variants, the ritual developed into ever more numerous and ever more expansive types; as such, it seems to be an ideal metaphor for mid- to late-imperial Chinese religion in general, which saw increasing syncretism among all religious traditions, increasing lay involvement in the conducting of their own religious affairs, and increasing concern with ghostly intercession into the human world. In the following pages, I will address some of the early evidence for the pre-Song performance of the Water-Land Retreat. Throughout this discussion of the history of the liturgy, I will constantly attempt to point to the visible roots of the malleability that I understand to be the defining characteristic of this ritual—a trait that distinguishes it from most other forms of Buddhist ritual practice with which I am familiar.

Apocryphal Origins

All manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat from the Song onward attribute its origins to Emperor Wu 武 (464-549; r. 502-549) of the Liang 梁 dynasty (502-557).

The basic story—retold in every performance of the ritual, but ultimately based on the “Shuilu dazhai lingji ji 水陸大齋靈跡記” (“Record of the Numinous Traces of the Great Retreat of [All Beings] of Water and Land”) composed by the Sichuanese judge Yang E in 1071¹⁵⁴—concerns a dream once seen by the emperor. One night, the emperor was visited by a divine monk 神僧 who told him of a ritual, known as the “Shuilu guangda mingzhai 水陸廣大冥齋” (“Expansive Netherworldly Retreat for [All Beings of] Water and Land”), that was capable of bringing about the universal salvation of all sentient beings. The emperor consulted the members of his court about the dream, and at the urging of his Buddhist spiritual adviser Baozhi 寶誌 (also known as Zhigong 誌公) (d. 514), he searched through the Buddhist canon for a manual for the ritual; not finding one, he composed his own based on the *Jiu mianran egui jing* 救面然餓鬼經 (*Sutra on Saving the Burning-Faced Hungry Ghosts*),¹⁵⁵ a text that was not translated until the middle of the Tang dynasty—that is, nearly two centuries after Emperor Wu’s supposed establishment of the Water-Land Retreat.¹⁵⁶ After composing the ritual manual, the emperor ostensibly sponsored the first performance of the rite in about 505 at Zexin si 澤心寺 on the island of Jin shan 金山 near Zhenjiang 鎮江 in modern-day Jiangsu Province. Yang E’s canonical account of the origins of the ritual then goes on to tell us that the liturgy inexplicably disappeared from popular consciousness until the seventh century, when the Chan Master Ying 英禪師 of Fahai Monastery

¹⁵⁴ See SSTL, 113c-114b. Yang E’s account was expanded slightly by the monk Zongze in the 1090s. This account, the “Shuilu yuanqi 水陸緣起” (“Origins of the Water-Land [Retreat]”), came to be included almost verbatim in later Water-Land Retreat manuals such as TDMY. See, for example, TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 1, 3a-4b.

¹⁵⁵ See the *Fo shuo jiu mianran egui tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說救面然餓鬼陀羅尼神咒經, translated by Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (act. late seventh to early eighth century), T21, no. 1314.

¹⁵⁶ This point is mentioned in Makita, 221-222, and in Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 43.

法海寺 in the capital of Chang'an 長安 rediscovered the liturgy after being visited in a dream by a strange figure. This figure—who revealed himself to be Prince Zhuangxiang 莊襄王 (281-247 BCE) of the Kingdom of Qin 秦國—implored Master Ying to resurrect the liturgy and perform it so that he and his followers, who had led exceptionally violent lives and had died before the introduction of the Buddha's teachings to China, might be liberated from their ghostly state to be reborn into a higher realm of existence.

As Makita noted, these stories are undoubtedly apocryphal; not only did Emperor Wu ostensibly base his liturgy on a sutra that was not translated until two centuries after his death, but also no official histories from the Liang period mention the performance of such a ritual.¹⁵⁷ Although this myth was perpetually repeated by later commentators on the ritual—indeed, as

¹⁵⁷ Liang-period sources do, however, mention the performance of the “Great Assembly of Nondiscrimination of the Four Classes of Buddhist Followers [i.e., monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen] 四部無遮大會,” a massive retreat of Indian origin initially held every five years, known in Sanskrit as the Pañcavarṣika, which continued to be performed through the Sui (581-618), Tang, and into the Liao (907-1125). In fascicle seven of the “Ben ji 本紀” section of the *Nanshi* 南史, for example, Emperor Wu is recorded as having sponsored multiple such rituals. As with the Water-Land Retreat, during this assembly, sustenance both alimentary and spiritual was bestowed on the attendees. However, the ritual does not seem to have had the same mortuary associations held by the Water-Land Retreat. Further, it seems only to have been an imperially sponsored event, unlike the Water-Land Retreat, which was often sponsored by private individuals. Moreover, despite the pretension toward universal bestowal of sustenance, the Great Assembly of Nondiscrimination seems to have been focused more exclusively on Buddhist deities and followers, whereas the Water-Land Retreat explicitly embraced (and converted) non-Buddhist beings. In other words, at a very high level of abstraction, the two rituals share important similarities, though in their details, they are clearly far from homologous. Consequently, I do not see the Great Assembly of Nondiscrimination as a direct predecessor to the Water-Land Retreat and am unwilling to say that because Emperor Wu of Liang performed such rituals, he therefore can be seen as the originator of the Water-Land Retreat. As I discuss below, I see the attribution of the ritual to Emperor Wu as a distinctly Song touch meant to lend an air of historicity to the ritual. See also Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 64-65, n. 50. It is also necessary to note that although the term “Assembly of Nondiscrimination 無遮會” became largely synonymous with the Water-Land Retreat by the Song dynasty, the term seems to have preserved its earlier meaning in certain contexts. For example, in FZTJ, fasc. 33, 319b, Zhipan quotes the Tang-period *Fazhu ji* 法住記 (translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 [602-664], in T49, no. 2030), which says that one can “invite monks of the four directions and perform a Nondiscriminatory Bestowal 請四方僧設無遮施” to make offerings to arhats. In his “Zifu fatang ji 資福法堂記,” Huihong 惠洪 (1071-1128) similarly speaks of “holding a Great Nondiscriminatory Assembly to feed both common and saintly monks 設無遮大會飯凡聖僧” (see Huihong 惠洪 [1071-1128], *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪, fasc. 21, in J23, no. B135, 680a). That the term possessed this degree of ambiguity should lead us to be cautious in automatically assuming that references to “Nondiscriminatory Assemblies” in Song sources necessarily refer to Water-Land Retreats.

noted above, a recitation of this mythical account of the origins of the Water-Land Retreat is included in every performance of the liturgy; and Emperor Wu, Baozhi, and Chan Master Ying came to be counted among the spirits to be honored in all performances of the ritual and to be depicted in Water-Land paintings—, this tale can only be a later fabrication meant to lend historical authority to a practice whose origins may, in fact, have been rather humble. Nevertheless, this mytho-history has continued to maintain a tight hold on scholars' imaginations. In recent years, Hou Chong 侯冲,¹⁵⁸ Li Xiaorong 李小榮,¹⁵⁹ and Xie Shengbao 謝生保 and Xie Jing 謝靜¹⁶⁰ have pointed to several hitherto unremarked sources—notably, manuscripts found among the documents recovered from Cave 17 of the Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟 in Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province—that, they argue, support the case for the Liang-period origin of the ritual and for the possible facticity—or at least contemporaneity—of the tale about Chan Master Ying. These sources deserve some attention.

The “Vows of the Eastern Capital”

Among the texts uncovered by these scholars is the “Dongdu fayuan wen 東都發願文” (“Vows of the Eastern Capital”), a manuscript dated to the first day of the fifth month of the third year of the Datong 大統 era of the Western Wei dynasty 西魏 (i.e., 537). Chronologically earliest among these works, and hence possibly most important for verifying the veracity of the

¹⁵⁸ Hou Chong 侯冲, “Tangmo Wudai de Shuilu yi 唐末五代的水陸儀,” in *Tianwen: chuantong wenhua yu xiandai shehui* 天問: 傳統文化與現代社會, edited by Cheng Gongrang 程恭讓 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2010), 234-260; and idem, “Zhongguo fojiao yishi yanjiu 中國佛教儀式研究,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Shanghai Normal University, 2010, esp. 263-286.

¹⁵⁹ Li Xiaorong 李小榮, “Shuilu fahui yuanliu lueshuo 水陸法會源流略說,” *Fayin* 法音, no. 260 (2006): 42-52.

¹⁶⁰ Xie Shengbao 謝生保 and Xie Jing 謝靜, “Dunhuang wenxian yu Shuilu fahui: Dunhuang Tang Wudai shiqi Shuilu fahui yanjiu 敦煌文獻與水陸法會: 敦煌唐五代時期水陸法會研究,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究, no. 96 (2006): 40-48.

Water-Land Retreat's origin myth, this manuscript purports to be a copy of a vow composed by Emperor Wu himself, who was then seventy-three years of age and in the thirty-fifth year of his reign.¹⁶¹ The text, which was found in Mogao Cave 17 in Dunhuang, Gansu Province, and is now preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, France, as document Pelliot 2189, records a series of vows made by Emperor Wu to bring benefits to all sentient beings seemingly on the occasion of a "Great Assembly of Nondiscrimination 無遮大會."¹⁶² These grand assemblies—essentially large-scale, imperially sponsored feasts for monks, nuns, and both male and female laity 四部, whose merit was dedicated to all sentient beings—were performed with some frequency throughout Emperor Wu's reign, and further performances were sponsored by the imperial courts of the Sui, Tang, and Liao. In his text, the emperor promises especially to endure myriad forms of suffering on behalf of all sentient beings of the four types of birth so that they may all attain Buddhahood 代此四生受種種苦, 令悉成佛果.¹⁶³ He makes these vows not only in order to bring benefits to himself, but also in order to aid myriad deceased family members.

The text begins with the emperor's calling a variety of deities to bear witness 同共證明 to his making the vows that follow; notably, he invokes all the *devas* 諸天, immortals 諸仙, spirits 諸神, and masses 一切大眾 of the ten directions of the cosmos 十方盡虛空界.¹⁶⁴ He then repents his infinite past transgressions of the Buddha's law and vows never again to violate the precepts, to eat living things, to forget his vows, etc. He expresses his wishes for punishment

¹⁶¹ The full text of P. 2189 is transcribed in *Dunhuang yuanwen ji* 敦煌願文集, edited by Huang Zheng 黃徵 and Wu Wei 吳偉 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1995), 283-290. For a bibliography of recent scholarship on this text, as well as Water-Land-centered interpretation of it, see Hou Chong, "Zhongguo fojiao yishi yanjiu," 263-267.

¹⁶² *Dunhuang yuanwen ji*, 286.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 287.

¹⁶⁴ This same invocation is repeated in *ibid.*, 283, 284, and 288.

should he ever violate those precepts, and he prays that he be able to overcome such difficulties through the compassion of the Buddha.¹⁶⁵ He then calls the Three Treasures 三寶 (the Buddha 佛, the Dharma 法, and the Sangha 僧) to bear witness to his acts of vowing and repenting. After repenting on behalf of his deceased father 皇考太祖文皇帝 and mother 皇妣獻皇太, he expresses his wish that they and all other sentient beings be able to reside permanently in the Pure Land 常處淨土,¹⁶⁶ and he prays similarly for his deceased siblings and their attendants.¹⁶⁷ Next, he calls all monks and all laity to partake in the benefits of this marvelous assembly, and he further calls “all beings of the four kinds of birth of the Three Lower Paths, who move through water, land, and air, as well as all beings of the Three Realms and the Six Paths 三途水陸空行一切四生乃至三界六趣” to the assembly, where he promises to relieve them of their suffering and to suffer in their stead.¹⁶⁸ With a sense of repetitive, all-encompassing insistency that echoes the descriptions of the salvific powers of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the “Pumen pin 普門品” (“Universal Gateway”) chapter of the *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經 (*Lotus Sutra*), he proceeds to enumerate the various ways in which he will bring benefits to all sentient beings.¹⁶⁹ He will, for example, suffer for those in Hell, he will transform those who are difficult to transform, he will carry over those who are difficult to carry over, he will rid them of

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 283-284.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 284.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 284-285.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 286.

¹⁶⁹ See “Guanshiyin pusa pumen pin 觀世音菩薩普門品,” Chapter 25 in *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經, translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344-413), in T9, no. 262, fasc. 7, 56c-58b.

poisons, and so forth. Thus, he prays, will they all be able to quickly achieve Buddhahood.¹⁷⁰

Reiterating his vows and his will to uphold them, he ends by calling the Three Treasures, and the various *devas*, immortals, spirits, and masses of the world, to bear witness to his great vow. The manuscript ends with a colophon indicating that it was presented by Prince Guangping of the Middle Capital 中京廣平王 and Zhirui 智叡, the Ritual Master of Nirvana 涅槃法師 of Dajue si 大覺寺, as an offering to the Tianwang dian 明王殿 (presumably of Dajue si), and that it was brushed by Linghu Xiaobao 令狐休寶.¹⁷¹

From the perspective of attempting to trace the origins of the Water-Land Retreat, and particularly with regard to attempting to link the ritual to Emperor Wu, the “Vows of the Eastern Capital” does possess some interesting features, as Xie Shengbao and Xie Jing, and Hou Chong, have all noted.¹⁷² Most obviously, the text uses the term “water-land 水陸” repeatedly when referring to the myriad sentient beings of water, earth, and air. Further, it has a decidedly cosmic bent: Emperor Liang seems absolutely intent on the universal, nondiscriminatory salvation of all sentient beings in the cosmos. Too, the emperor seems decidedly concerned with post-mortem salvation. We might also draw a link between this text and the Water-Land Retreat in their shared invocations of non-Buddhist protector deities and of the Three Treasures to bear witness to the acts of vowing and repenting.

However, the seeming similarities between this vow and the Water-Land Retreat may not be as significant as imagined. The term “water-land”—particularly when used in the context of phrases invoking “all sentient beings of water, land, [and air] 水陸[空]一切有情”—appears with

¹⁷⁰ *Dunhuang yuanwen ji*, 287.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 288.

¹⁷² Xie and Xie, 44; and Hou Chong, “Zhongguo fojiao yishi yanjiu,” 263-267.

great frequency in Chinese Buddhist texts from the fourth century onward. Moreover, the shared interest in universal and post-mortem salvation hardly are traits that can be seen as uniquely linking the vow and the ritual. Indeed, such salvific interests are widely noted in Mahayana texts of all periods; after all, the vow to liberate all sentient beings from *samsāra* is, fundamentally, the root of the bodhisattva path. Further, wishes for post-mortem prosperity—and particularly, rebirth in the Pure Land—routinely appear in dedicatory inscriptions on Chinese Buddhist images from the fourth century onward. Too, the invocation of the Three Treasures also appears with great frequency in ritual manuals and vows of all periods of Chinese Buddhism. In this sense, the “Vows of the Eastern Capital” can be linked no more directly to the Water-Land Retreat than it can to a great number of other Chinese Buddhist texts and rituals.

This leaves us with only the shared interest in non-Buddhist protective deities linking the vow and the ritual. Yet within the context of Liang-dynasty Buddhism, it might be more plausible to view the invocation of such figures not as a nod toward the syncretism (in the sense of a systematized linking of multiple religious traditions) that characterizes mid- to late-imperial rituals like the Water-Land Retreat, but rather as connected to the constant attempts on the part of early Chinese Buddhist proselytizers to convert indigenous deities to serve as protectors of the dharma.¹⁷³ Early collections of Chinese Buddhist miracle tales and the accounts of the founding of various temples are filled with stories of local deities, who had initially shown decided hostility toward Buddhism, ultimately coming to serve as guardians of Buddhist monasteries. Thus, it is only in the most abstract, generic way that we might link Emperor Wu’s vows during his performance of a Great Assembly of Nondiscrimination to the Water-Land Retreat in its

¹⁷³ See, for example, James Robson, “Changing Places: The Conversions of Religious Sites in China,” in *Images, Relics, and Legends: The Formation and Transformation of Buddhist Sacred Sites*, edited by James Benn, Jinhua Chen, and James Robson (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 2012), 90-111.

mature Song and post-Song form. Rather than viewing a causal relationship between this vow and the later ritual, I would argue instead that the codifiers of the later liturgy, being aware of Emperor Wu's penchant for all-embracing cosmic assemblies (which are, after all, given brief mention in both Buddhist and secular histories of the Liang dynasty¹⁷⁴), sought to give their newly systematized ritual practice an air of historicity by invoking this earlier, albeit conceptually distant, precedent. Indeed, given the seeming obsession with Emperor Wu and with Liang-period Buddhism in general during the Song, I wonder if the attribution of the composition of the liturgy to him by Yang E might not be read as a distinctly Song touch. The thaumaturge Baozhi, who ostensibly first exhorted Emperor Wu to search the Buddhist canon for the Water-Land liturgy, seems to have been but a minor figure in the history of Chinese Buddhism before the Song, when suddenly he came to be associated with a series of prophecies regarding the founding of the Song state.¹⁷⁵ Emperor Wu himself is frequently evoked as an exemplar of Buddhist practice in the writings of Song literati.¹⁷⁶ Given this period interest, as well as the historical fact of Emperor Wu's having routinely sponsored rituals like the Great Retreat of Nondiscrimination, it seems not unlikely that this detail about the origin of the Water-Land Retreat was specifically fabricated by Song-dynasty practitioners of the ritual. In the end, such attributions to early figures may tell us a great deal about the attributers, their knowledge of the past, and the lasting impact of such attributions on our historical imagination today.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, Hou Chong, "Zhongguo fojiao yishi yanjiu," 267-269.

¹⁷⁵ See Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, "Hōshi oshō denkō: Chūgoku ni okeru Bukkyō reigen juyō no ichi keitai 寶誌和尚傳攷," in idem, *Chūgoku bukkyō-shi kenkyū*, vol. 2, 56-84, esp. 73; and Satō Seijun 佐藤成順, *Sōdai Bukkyō no kenkyū: Genshō no jōdōkyō* 宋代仏教の研究：元照の浄土教 (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 2001), 27-61.

¹⁷⁶ These issues are discussed in Makita, "Hōshi oshō denkō," vol. 2, 56-84. Indeed, it is my sense that Emperor Wu is invoked by Song literati more frequently than he was in earlier periods, though more quantitative research remains to be done.

The Fantastic Tale of Chan Master Ying

Recently, Hou Chong has pointed to an entry in the *New Record of the Two Capitals* 兩京新記 by the mid-Tang scholar-official Wei Shu 韋述 (d. 757) as possible evidence that the story of Chan Master Ying's rediscovery of the Water-Land Retreat in the seventh century was not fabricated by later compilers of the liturgy.¹⁷⁷ The text recounts that in the first year of the Xianxiang 咸亨 era (670), Chan Master Ying was residing in Fahai Monastery south of the western gate of the city. His fellow monk Huijian 惠簡 once saw mysterious floating figures entering Ying's chambers. These turned out to be the ghosts of Prince Zhuangxiang of Qin and his myriad followers. They complained of starvation, and consequently, Ying promised to feed them the following evening. During the meal, Prince Zhuangxiang recounted that he had not eaten for eighty years; because he and his followers lived during a time before the introduction of Buddhism and consequently ate meat and performed blood sacrifices, and because they had, moreover, led extremely violent lives, they were continuously punished in Hell. To thank Ying for feeding him, the Qin prince led Ying to his tomb, which he said contained some sort of treasure. Having renounced worldly attachments, Ying, however, refused the offer. So the story ends. Nowhere is the Water-Land Retreat mentioned—nor, indeed, does any particular ritual practice besides that of a generic rite of food bestowal appear. Instead, the tale simply serves as an account of an episode of anecdotal interest to the type of Tang readers targeted by a book like the *New Records of the Two Capitals*, which records numerous such fantastic tales about famed sites throughout the cities.

¹⁷⁷ The full text is given in Wei Shu 韋述, *Liang jing xin ji* 兩京新記 (reprinted as *Jiaozheng Liang jing xin ji* 校正兩京新記), edited by Chen Ziyi 陳子怡 (Xi'an: Xi'an heji yinshu guan, 1936), 5-6; a punctuated edition published in simplified characters is available in Zhou, vol. 3, 1276. It is this edition that is cited below.

Yang E and the compilers of later Water-Land liturgies clearly took inspiration from this tale, however. The contours of the story are little changed by his hand, though the content is greatly enriched. Yang E's account may be worth citing in whole:

Master Ying was sitting alone in the abbot's quarters when he saw a strange figure of lofty appearance wearing a crown, whose feet did not touch the ground. He came before Master Ying and said, "Your disciple was headed toward the offices of the Sovereign [of Mt. Tai] and happened to see you, Chan Master. Knowing of the master's salvific compassion, I have come to make a request. There are a few who are happy and sincere and who wish to hear what you have to say. In this world there is the Great Retreat of [All Beings of] Water and Land, which can suffuse the nether-reaches with its benefits. If not for my master, there would be no way of conducting the ritual."

Ying said, "How can I argue with that?"

The strange figure then said, "The liturgy for this ritual was compiled by Emperor Wu of Liang. Now, at Dajue Monastery 大覺寺,¹⁷⁸ there is a monk from [the region of] Wu 吳 named Yiji 義濟 who possesses it. For a long time, he has held it in a cloth box, which has nearly been destroyed by moths. I wish that the Master would go to procure it and serve as a guide. If you were to release me from Hell, how could I not be aware of the result?"

Master Ying agreed and sought out Dajue Monastery. He visited Yiji. As expected, he procured the text. Then, on the appointed day, at Shanbei Monastery 山北寺, he conducted the ritual according to proper procedure. After finishing, he again saw the strange figure and dozens of followers, who came together to thank him, saying: "I, your disciple, am Prince Zhuangxiang of Qin." He pointed to his followers and said, "These men—Fan Hui, the Duke of Rang, Bai Qi, Wang Jian, Zhang Yi, Chen Zhen—all are my servants. They together sit for punishment, long remaining in the Bureau of the Netherworld, whose great night long has been so dark and empty. Today, my kind master has conducted a retreat and repented our sins. His disciples are very many, and they have all received the power of kindness and will be born among humans. Fearing [that they may be reborn] in a different world or foreign country where they will be unable to see you again, they have come to thank you one after another. Now, there is a small trifle beneath your disciple's tomb. I wish to confer it upon you. Your disciple's tomb is outside the Tonghua Gate."

Master Ying said, "I have heard that when the Red Turbans were causing trouble in the Western Han, [your] tomb mounds were all opened up. Could this thing possibly still be there?"

¹⁷⁸ Note that this is the same name as that of the monastery to which Zhirui, the monk associated with the "Dongdu fayuan wen" discussed above, was attached.

Prince Xiang said, “When your disciple was buried, these goods were buried deeply—so much so that people could not ever see them.”

Master Ying said, “But this humble monk values being content with his lot; even if I had some precious thing, how would I use it? I wish that the prince and his followers will escape from here, will realize the causes of their previous lifetimes, will forever escape from this karmic world, and will purely ascend to the path of goodness. This is all that this humble monks desires.” His words finished, [the prince] disappeared. Ying strived ever more diligently, and thereafter, with the monk of Wu, he constantly performed this retreat. Its wondrous numinous responses were almost without limit. From that time on, the ritual has spread through the world; among all those followers who sow the fields of merit, there is none who does not respectfully conduct it.¹⁷⁹

The similarities between this expanded tale and its abbreviated forebear are clear. Prince Zhuangxiang, doomed to dwell in Hell, visits Master Ying, requests his assistance, and promises him great tomb-buried treasures for his efforts. However, several important elements have been transformed and added. No longer is Prince Zhuangxiang presented as a hunger-stricken Hell-dweller who visits Master Ying solely to beg for food; rather, he has become a figure who is aware of both his own doomed condition and the means of releasing himself from that state. Importantly, this means of salvation that he seems, surprisingly, to know quite well is the Water-Land Retreat. By bringing the ritual to the attention of Master Ying, he not only saves himself and his followers but also ensures that the liturgical text, which is on the verge of being lost to the ravages of insects, will continue to be transmitted. The tale, in other words, has been transformed from a mere “tale of the strange 志怪” into an “origin story 緣起.”

Later retellings of the tale polish and reinforce certain details even further. In Zongze’s 宗蹟 (act. ca. 1100) “Shuilu yuanqi 水陸緣起” (“Origins of the Water-Land [Retreat]”) of 1096—a slightly expanded version of Yang E’s account, which now forms the model for the histories of the ritual recounted during its performance even today—Prince Zhuangxiang says

¹⁷⁹ SSTL, 114a-b. Punctuated edition in Hou Chong, “Zhongguo fojiao yishi yanjiu,” 287-288.

that he actually experienced Emperor Wu's performance of the ritual and saw the ministers of King Zhou 紂王之臣 being liberated from suffering.¹⁸⁰ His transgressions, however, were too great, and consequently, he was forced to remain in Hell. Prince Zhuangxiang's connection to the Water-Land Retreat thus becomes even more intimate, and his knowledge of it, even deeper. Nevertheless, despite the explicit discussions of the Water-Land Retreat in these Song retellings of the Master Ying story, to see the abbreviated account in the *New Records of the Two Capitals* as possible proof that the ritual was being performed in the seventh or eighth century seems imprudent. Instead, as was true of the attribution of the origin of the Water-Land Retreat to Emperor Wu, here, too, it may be best to conjecture that the Song compilers of the first systematized manuals for the performance of the ritual adapted this earlier story, whose themes of netherworldly suffering and monkish salvation fit well with the principal charge of the Water-Land Retreat, to their own myth-generating ends. In other words, the impulse toward the pastiche-like appropriation of earlier texts which we remarked in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yuwen* seems to have been present among compilers of Water-Land texts from the very beginning.

Earliest Historical Traces: Epigraphy and Biography

Leaving behind the early Tang and entering into the late Tang and Five Dynasties, the history of the Water-Land Retreat becomes both more concrete and more complicated. It is in this period—notably, in the ninth century—that traces of the ritual start to proliferate, though the traces are, in fact, barely perceptible within the vastness of the historical record. They take a variety of forms, ranging from brief epigraphic mentions, to biographies and supernatural tales, and ultimately, to liturgical manuals themselves.

¹⁸⁰ SSTL, 115a.

The earliest, more verifiably historical mention of the Water-Land Retreat is to be found in the title of a stele, now no longer extant, recorded several centuries after its carving by Chen Si 陳思 (act. mid thirteenth century) in his epigraphic compendium, *Baoke congbian* 寶刻叢編 (*Collected Treasured Carvings*). Chen's record simply states that there was a stele located somewhere in Jiankang Prefecture 建康府 (modern-day Nanjing 南京, Jiangsu Province) dated to the sixth month of the seventh year of the Dahe 大和 era (833) which he calls a "Tang xiu Shuilu wuzhe zhai ti 唐修水陸無遮齋題" ("Tang-Dynasty Inscription on Holding a Nondiscriminatory Retreat [of All Beings] of Water and Land").¹⁸¹ Another Tang Water-Land stele, the "Dong Nengren yuan Shuilu hui ji 東能仁院水陸會記" ("Record of the Water-Land Assembly of East Nengren Cloister"), located in Wuhu County 蕪湖縣 in modern-day Anhui Province, is mentioned in the *Yudi beiji mu* 輿地碑記目 (*Catalogue of Stele Records Throughout the World*) compiled by Wang Xiangzhi 王象之 (act. early thirteenth century).¹⁸² Finally, Chen Si also mentions another possibly Water-Land-related stele near Niaocheng 鳥程, close to Huzhou 湖州 in modern-day Zhejiang Province, dated to the nineteenth day of the eighth month of the fourth year of the Xiantong 咸通 era (863). Entitled the "Chongzhi Xingguo si Mingyang zhai she ji 重置興國寺冥陽齋社記" ("Record of the Reestablishment of the Society for the Retreat of [All Beings] of This World and the Netherworld at Xingguo Monastery") it was

¹⁸¹ Chen Si 陳思 (active mid thirteenth century), *Collected Treasured Carvings* (*Baoke congbian* 寶刻叢編), fasc. 15, in SKQS. This and the following early steles mentioned are cited in Dai, 15-16.

¹⁸² Wang Xiangzhi 王象之, *Yudi beiji mu* 輿地碑記目, fasc. 1, in SKQS.

apparently composed by a monk named Jianzhang 簡章.¹⁸³ Interestingly, the title of the earliest of these steles combines the terms “Nondiscriminatory” and “Water-Land,” perhaps suggesting that the non-imperial practitioners of this new Water-Land Retreat were attempting to secure a loftier pedigree for their practice by implying that it was a continuation of that earlier, imperially sponsored ritual.

Zanning’s 贊寧 (919-1001) *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (*Song-Dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks*) includes two biographical accounts concerning late-ninth- and early-tenth-century monks who seem to have specialized in the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. The monk Zunhui 遵誨 (865-945), a noted devotee of the *Avataṃsaka* and *Lotus Sūtras* active in northern and central China, is described as having worked “even more widely in the past twenty years, repeatedly bestowing the Dharma Sustenance of [All Beings of] Water and Land to ghosts and spirits, urging all to adorn the path of *bodhicitta* 近二十年更無間曠，復別施鬼神水陸法食，皆勸勵莊嚴菩提心行矣.”¹⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the monk Shouzhen 守真 (894-971), an Esoteric master active in Sichuan, is noted to have “opened Water-Land altars twenty times 開水陸道場二十遍” in the course of his career, while also performing *abhiṣeka* initiations and various rituals related to the Western Pure Land and to Mañjuśrī.¹⁸⁵ These biographies thus give us the sense that Water-Land Retreat was already being performed by monks of various sectarian backgrounds across the empire within several decades of the ritual’s appearance in the historical record.

¹⁸³ Ibid., fasc. 14. This stele is also mentioned in *Liuyi zhi yi lu* 六藝之一錄, compiled by Ni Tao 倪濤 (act. eighteenth century), fasc. 85, in SKQS. Like “Nondiscriminatory Assembly,” the term “Retreat of [All Beings] of This World and the Netherworld 冥陽齋” can be read as a synonym for the Water-Land Retreat in many contexts.

¹⁸⁴ *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001), 988, fasc. 28, in T50, no. 2061, 884c.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., fasc. 25, 871c.

Thanks to the survival of the titles and dates of these texts and their dates, and to the aforementioned biographies, we can speculate with a high degree of confidence that by the mid ninth century, the Water-Land Retreat was beginning to gain some degree of popularity among Buddhist followers throughout China. Exactly how it was performed in these regions at this particular time, or even if this is the same basic Water-Land Retreat to which we refer today, remains unclear. However, since the term “Water-Land Retreat” is to be found in no documentary or epigraphic record before this moment in history, and since it has continued to be used in a consistent manner since then, it seems likely that these ninth-century practices of the Water-Land Retreat are connected, if only tenuously, to what is still practiced today. As we shall see throughout the remainder of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 2.2, the mid ninth century indeed seems to have been the formative moment in the history of the Water-Land Retreat and its visual culture.

Contemporaneous Daoist Claims

Somewhat surprisingly, the next earliest text to mention the Water-Land Retreat, and indeed, a much longer account of it, is to be found in a Daoist source. This is a story about the immortal Lord Xu 許君, which was included in the now-lost *Luyi ji* 錄異記 (*Records of the Strange*) compiled by the famed Daoist master Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) active in Sichuan in the court of the Former Shu 蜀 (907-925) kingdom¹⁸⁶; it has been preserved in the

¹⁸⁶ On Du Guangting, see especially Franciscus Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933): tao ïte de cour à la fin de la Chine médiévale* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des hautes écoles chinoises, 1989). Du Guangting was also the recodifier of the “Huanglu zhai 黃籙齋” (“Retreat of the Yellow Register”), a Daoist ritual practiced since the fifth century that took on many of the same functions as the Water-Land Retreat during the late-Tang through Song periods. For an outline of the earliest form of the Retreat of the Yellow Register, see John Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao: somme taoïste du Vie siècle* (Paris: Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient, 1981), 163-165. For an introduction to Du’s liturgy, see Kristofer Schipper, “Taishang huanglu zhayì 太上黃籙齋儀,” in *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, edited by Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 578-580. For a comparison of the Water-Land Retreat and the Retreat of the Yellow Register, see Matsumoto Kōichi 松本浩一, “Songdai de Shuili zhai yu Huanglu zhai 宋代の水陸齋與黃籙齋,” *Di*

late-tenth-century imperial compendium of supramundane tales, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Expansive Records of the Taiping* [xingguo Era]).¹⁸⁷ Du recounts that Lord Xu—an unidentified figure, but perhaps one of two fifth-century patriarchs of the Highest Purity 上清 lineage¹⁸⁸—once had an old stone stele, the writing on which was all but indiscernible. He effaced the remaining textual traces in order to reuse it to commemorate his construction of a Daoist abbey, but in doing so, he began to feel ill at ease. Suddenly, a voice in mid-air called out his name and told him to seek the Official of Water 水官. If he did not do so, the voice said, he would be visited by immeasurable disaster. Asking the voice what it meant but receiving no answer, Xu then went to make sacrifices to the Official of Water. He learned from the Official that the long-deceased person who had initially inscribed the stone had been so annoyed by Xu’s having erased his name that he filed a complaint against Xu in the Official’s otherworldly court. The Official thus told Xu to restore the original text, which he did. Xu later had a dream in which he was visited by a divine being who thanked him for restoring his name and who asked that he perform a “Great Offering [to All Beings] of Water and Land 水陸大醮” to help all the myriad spirits of the mountains and waters. The performance of such a ritual would enable these beings to be recommended to the Three Officials 三官 (of Heaven 天, Earth 地, and Water 水—also

yi jie Daojiao xiandao wenhua guoji xueshu yantaohui 第一屆道教仙道文化國際學術研討會, unpublished conference proceedings, Guoli Zhongshan daxue, 2006, 641-654; John Lagerwey spoke on a similar topic at an international conference on Song-dynasty Daoism in Hong Kong in September 2011. I thank Prof. Shih-shan Susan Huang for sharing these references with me. The relationship between the two rituals, especially given their contemporaneous emergence and recodification in the ninth and tenth centuries, deserves further historical study.

¹⁸⁷ See *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, compiled by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996), 978, fasc. 72, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 452-453, in HJDZ.

¹⁸⁸ The *Yunji qian* 雲笈七籤, a Daoist encyclopedia compiled by Zhang Junfang 張君房 (ca. 961-ca.1042) in 1007, less than thirty years after the completion of the *Taiping guangji* in 978, includes biographies of two patriarchs known as Lord Xu, both of whom lived in the fifth century. They are Lord Xu, the Perfected Man of Mt. Leiping 雷平山真人許君, and the Immortal Lord Xu, Magistrate of Linju 仙人臨沮令許君. See *Yunji qian* 雲笈七籤 (CT 1032), compiled by Zhang Junfang 張君房 (ca. 961-ca.1042), 1007, fasc. 5, in ZHDZ, vol. 29, 57b-58a.

known as the Three Primes 三元) for employment in their courts. Moreover, the spirit said, in performing such a rite, Xu himself would attain the Dao. Upon performing the ritual, everything that had been foretold was realized, which ensured the subsequent widespread popularity of the ritual.

It is doubtful that this story preserves much historical truth; after all, if the Lord Xu it purports to describe is indeed one of the two fifth-century immortals mentioned above, then this story would ascribe the origins of the Water-Land Retreat to a time that precedes even the canonical Buddhist mytho-history linking it to the sixth-century Emperor Wu of Liang. Regardless of its facticity, this story from the late-Tang or Five Dynasties still suggests a few interesting points regarding the social status of the Water-Land Retreat at a very early moment in its history. First, it confirms that the Water-Land Retreat was understood, even by non-Buddhists, to be a powerful ritual of universal salvation as early as the ninth century. It is, as the story says, a ritual that can aid the myriad spirits of the mountains and waters; and it seems to have been so effective in doing so that Daoists felt compelled to appropriate it for their own tradition. The Water-Land Retreat helps these spirits by assuring them a place within the otherworldly bureaucracy, here represented by the Three Officials. In other words, it is a ritual that allows human officiants to take an active role in the spirit world, ensuring that the spirits remain properly accommodated in their world and do not interfere in ours. In creating such a picture of the Water-Land Retreat, the story seems to imply that the ritual may possess an exorcistic, or perhaps preemptively exorcistic, function, reaffirming the boundaries between the two realms.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ For a remarkable study of the role of exorcism in all Song religious traditions, see Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). For more on Daoist exorcistic practices specifically, see the essays collected in *Exorcism in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium*, edited by Florian C. Reiter (Weisbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011).

More importantly, however, the story shows a very close association between this ritual and Daoist practitioners. The story clearly reveals an active attempt on the part of Daoists to appropriate this powerful ritual for themselves; and as I will show below, other contemporaneous records suggest that Daoists—and especially their deities—were central to this ostensibly Buddhist ritual from the late ninth century onward. It also seems possible that this very early appearance of a Daoist claim to the origin of the ritual speaks to the rapidity with which the ritual gained widespread popularity. The fact that Du Guangting, who served in the court of the Former Shu kingdom in Sichuan after the fall of the Tang, wrote about this ritual likely also points to its particular popularity in Sichuan, which, as I will discuss below, was often seen as the birthplace of the “orthodox” version of the ritual in the Song and after. Unfortunately, of course, this record tells us nothing about how the ritual was actually performed.

An Early Pictorial Pantheon

The first account of any art historical significance related to the Water-Land Retreat is to be found in the biography of Zhang Nanben 張南本 (act. mid to late ninth century)—a painter who worked in Chengdu 成都, the capital of Sichuan, from the 880s onward—in Huang Xiufu’s 黃休復 (act. ca. 1000) *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄 (*Record of Famed Painters of Yi Prefecture*), a catalogue of painters active near Chengdu from the late Tang through the early Song.¹⁹⁰ The account tells us that after Tang Emperor Xizong’s 僖宗 (862-888; r. 873-888) return to the capital of Chang’an from his temporary capital in Chengdu in 885, Prefectural Magistrate Chen 府主陳太師 established a Water-Land Cloister 水陸院 in Chengdu’s Baoli Monastery 寶曆寺. He then hired Zhang Nanben to create paintings of the spirits of the

¹⁹⁰ Huang Xiufu 黃休復 (act. early eleventh century), *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄, fasc. 1, dated 1001, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 191.

Heavens and Earth 天神地祇, the Three Officials and the Five Emperors 三官五帝, the deities of thunder and lightning 雷公電母, the spirits of the mountains and marshes 岳瀆神仙, and emperors and monarchs from the past onward 自古帝王.¹⁹¹ These are all spirits of a non-Buddhist—and in fact, decidedly Daoist or vernacular—character. Presiding over all dimensions of natural space, they here appear within the context of a definitively Buddhist ritual environment. More importantly, they are also deities that are explicitly mentioned in manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat from the late eleventh century onward (though not necessarily in manuals composed in Sichuan)¹⁹² and that are invariably depicted in Ming- and Qing-dynasty painted hanging scrolls used in performances of the ritual.¹⁹³ They are not, however, deities whose names are to be found among the lists of spirits invoked in Emperor Wu's "Vows of the Eastern Capital," nor, to my knowledge, does such an extensive, eclectic set of deities appear in Buddhist liturgies prior to this period.¹⁹⁴ Again, the fundamentally syncretic nature of this nominally Buddhist ritual, as well as its consistently cosmic pretensions, is clear from the earliest years of its performance.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² See, for example, Zongze 宗蹟 (act. ca. 1100), "Shuilu yuanqi 水陸緣起," 1096, in SSTL, 114b, which includes the following instructions: "Below, one makes offerings to the Five Marchmounts and the deities of the rivers and seas, the dragon spirits of the great land, the peoples of the past, the myriad asuras, the officials of the Netherworld and their attendants, the myriad beings of Hell, shady spirits and stagnant ghosts, the myriad ghosts and spirits lacking both master and support, and the animals of the dharma-realm 下則供養五嶽河海，大地龍神，往古人倫，阿修羅眾，冥官眷屬，地獄眾生，幽魂滯魄，諸鬼神眾，無主無依諸鬼神眾，法界旁生。"

¹⁹³ Caroline Gyss-Vermande has written on such Water-Land paintings, especially their depictions of nature spirits. See Caroline Gyss-Vermande, "Démon et merveilles: vision de la nature dans une peinture liturgique du XVe siècle," *Arts asiatiques* 43 (1988): 106-122.

¹⁹⁴ Such eclectic pantheons of spirits are, however, mentioned in contemporaneous prayer texts found among the manuscripts in Mogao Cave 17 in Dunhuang, as will be discussed below; such materials suggest that it was, indeed, in the mid ninth century that cosmic pantheons of the type generally associated with the Water-Land Retreat became a topic of general period concern.

Huang Xiufu's record goes on to say of Zhang Nanben's Water-Land works that "among the various temples in Shu [that is, Sichuan], there were more than one hundred twenty paintings 蜀中諸廟一百二十餘幀." Many scholars have taken this statement to indicate that at this time, a set of more than one hundred twenty paintings was typically used when conducting the Water-Land Retreat in Sichuan.¹⁹⁵ This is significant, and somewhat curious, for the *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統 (*Orthodox Lineage of the Śākya Gate*)—an eight-fascicle encyclopedia of Buddhist history, practice, and doctrine compiled by the monk Zongjian 宗鑑 (act. mid thirteenth century) in 1232, more than three centuries after Zhang Nanben's lifetime—records that the use of one hundred twenty paintings in performances of the ritual was a rather *recent* innovation. Specifically, he remarks that in the regions of Jiangsu, Anhui, the capital, and Henan (江淮京浙—literally, the Yangzi River, the Huai River, the capital, and the Xi River), the ritual was performed with one hundred twenty paintings, which he considered to be additions by later practitioners in (misguided) veneration of the ritual 皆後人踵事增華, 以崇其法.¹⁹⁶ In Sichuan, on the other hand, practitioners followed an older method, which divided deities among the eight positions of the Upper and Lower Halls of the ritual space—the method systematized by Yang E, the layman of Eastern Sichuan who compiled the first widely circulated Water-Land manual in 1071, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 1.3.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*," 38, follows this interpretation. Lennert Gesterkamp, *The Heavenly Court: Daoist Temple Painting in China, 1200-1400* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 26, argues that this is a misreading and that the sentence simply indicates that a total of more than one hundred twenty scrolls by Zhang Nanben survived in various temples throughout Shu.

¹⁹⁶ *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, compiled by Zongjian 宗鑑 (act. mid thirteenth century), 1232, fasc. 4, in X75, no. 1513, 304a.

¹⁹⁷ See SSTL, 116c-118b.

The Water and Land of Dunhuang in the Five Dynasties

Remarkably, a group of ritual manuals and model litanies that bear titles linking them to the Water-Land Retreat have survived from the late-Tang and Five Dynasties periods, albeit in a location far removed from the central and southern Chinese population centers with which the various steles and stories mentioned above were connected. These texts, like the “Dongdu fayuan wen,” were preserved in Cave 17, the “Library Cave 藏經洞,” of the Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, and have received some scholarly attention during the past several years.¹⁹⁸ Further, there also exists a manuscript dating to the period of the Dali Kingdom’s 大理國 (937-1253) control over modern-day Yunnan Province in southwestern China that preserves a contemporaneous Water-Land-like liturgy likely imported from Sichuan before the closing of trade between the two regions in the tenth century.¹⁹⁹

Two related manuscripts—which can be dated to the late-Tang or Five Dynasties periods (that is, Dunhuang’s “Guiyi jun 歸義軍” [“Return to Righteousness Army”] period [848-1036]) based on their mention of certain events earlier in the Tang, their avoidance of certain taboo characters, and their borrowing from the teachings of both Chan and Esoteric Buddhism—compile instructions for the construction of a wide variety of altars, while also listing the benefits that the performance of rites at such altars will bring.²⁰⁰ The first, Pelliot 3913, which is entitled *Jingang jun jing jingang ding yiqie rulai shenmiao mimi Jingang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishier zhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze Dapiluzhena fo jingang xindi famen mifa jie tanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十二種壇法經作用威儀法則大毘盧遮

¹⁹⁸ See esp. Xie and Xie, 40-48; and Hou Chong, “Tangmo Wudai,” 234-260.

¹⁹⁹ Hou Chong, “Tangmo Wudai,” 245.

²⁰⁰ See the introductions to these texts by Hou Chong in ZW, vol. 11, 17-21, esp. 19-20, and 145-147, esp. 147.

那佛金剛心地法門密法戒壇法儀則 (*Grand Laws for the Use of the Sutra of the Method of the Forty-Two Types of Altars for the Performance of the Great Samādhi of the Profound Secret Vajra Realm of All Tathāgatas of the Vajra Peak of the Lofty Vajra Sutra and Laws of the Method of the Secret Dharma Precept Altars of the Vajra Mind-Ground of Mahavairocana Buddha*; hereafter, the *Forty-Two Methods*) and which is attributed (most likely apocryphally) by inscription to the eighth-century Esoteric master Amoghavajra, includes several sections bearing a connection to something like the Water-Land Retreat.²⁰¹ Most important among these is “Section Four: The Method for the Water-Land Lamp Altar for the Protection of the State Spoken by the Buddha 佛說護國水陸燈壇之法部第四.”²⁰² Furthermore, appended to the end of Stein 2144, a variant recension of the text held in the British Library, is a series of litanies to be used in securing a ritual site, bestowing food, and directing the merit made during the ritual to benefit all sentient beings, which also seems to share significant similarities with later Water-Land Retreats.

The instructions and praises for the various altars described in the *Forty-Two Methods* consist largely of rather concise texts; all are far more abbreviated than the later liturgical manuals we examined above. Although one could relatively easily construct altars based on the instructions included here, one would be hard-pressed to perform the rituals meant to accompany

²⁰¹ The full text of this manuscript is transcribed in *ibid.*, 22-144; sections are also included in Tanaka Ryōshō 田中良昭, *Tonkō Zenshū bunken no kenkyū* 敦煌禪宗文献の研究 (Tokyo: Daitō shuppansha, 1983). See also Hirai Yūkei 平井宥慶, “Tonkō shutsudo gigikyō bunken yori mita mikkyō to zen 敦煌出土偽疑經文献よりみた密教と禪” in *Bukkyō to girei: Katō Shōichi Sensei koki kinen ronbunshū* 仏教と儀礼: 加藤章一先生古稀記念論文集 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1977), 139-162. Pelliot 3913 serves as the base text for the transcription in *Zangwai fojiao wenxian*. Stein 2144 (verso) and 2316 (verso) in the British Library; Peking University 15147, 05298, 02301 (verso), 02431 (verso), and 06239 (verso); and Gansu Provincial Museum 015 were used as comparative resources. See ZW, vol. 11, 18-19, and 21.

²⁰² P. 3913, 30-34.

them.²⁰³ Nevertheless, by combing through a series of related sections of the text, we are able to gain some sense of the scale, appearance, and perceived efficacy of the rituals implied. Two slightly different versions of an early rite associated with an “Altar of [All Beings] of Water and Land 水陸之壇” seem to be described. Section Four describes a ritual space consisting of a Water-Land Altar,²⁰⁴ a Water-Land Lamp Altar 水陸燈壇 (which seems to be composed of a Wheel of Heaven 天輪 and a Wheel of Earth 地輪),²⁰⁵ an Altar of the Five Directions 五方之壇, an Altar of Samantabhadra 普賢之壇, an Altar of Mañjuśrī 文殊之壇, an Altar of the Five Buddhas 五佛之壇, and an Altar of [All Beings of] Water and Land of the Eight Directions 八方水陸之壇.²⁰⁶ Detailed instructions are given for the construction of the Water-Land Altar, the Water-Land Lamp Altar, and the Altar of Mañjuśrī. We are told that the primary goal of constructing these altars is to “carry over and transform all sentient beings 度化眾生.”²⁰⁷

²⁰³ A related manuscript, Peking University 02074, the *Jingang jun jing jingang ding yiqie rulai shenmiao mimi Jingang jie da sanmeiye xiuxing sishijiu zhong tanfa jing zuoyong weiyi faze Dapiluzhena fo jingang xindi famen mifa jie tanfa yize* 金剛峻經金剛頂一切如來深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶修行四十九種壇法經作用威儀法則大毘盧遮那佛金剛心地法門密法戒壇法儀則 (*Grand Laws for the Use of the Sutra of the Method of the Forty-Nine Types of Altars for the Performance of the Great Samādhi of the Profound Secret Vajra Realm of All Tathāgatas of the Vajra Peak of the Lofty Vajra Sutra and Laws of the Method of the Secret Dharma Precept Altars of the Vajra Mind-Ground of Mahāvairocana Buddha*) includes even more precise instructions for the construction of a Water-Land Altar and a Water-Land Lamp Altar. The names and attributes of the various buddhas, bodhisattvas, vajrapāṇis, and vidyārājas included in both altars are all recorded. See “Section Four: Samantabhadra Bodhisattva’s Method of Securing the Altar Spoken by the Buddha, [including] the Names of the Bodhisattvas, the Colors of Their Bodies, and the Placement of their Seats 佛說普賢菩薩安壇之法，菩薩名字並及身色，座位之處部第四,” and “Section Four [*sic*]: The Altars of [All Beings of] Water and Land and of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, and the Names of the Bodhisattvas and *Vajrapāṇis* of Great Compassion, the Colors of Their Bodies, and the Placement of Their Seats 佛說水陸，文殊菩薩之壇安大悲金剛菩薩名字，身色及座位之處部第四,” in PKU 02074, 165-178.

²⁰⁴ P. 3913, 31.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 32.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 33.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 30.

Besides detailing the procedures for opening the altars, the text also emphasizes the bestowal of food at morning, noon, and night so that *asuras*, hungry ghosts, and all sentient beings of water and land may be sated 日日三時，散施飲食，修羅，餓鬼，水陸有情，盡令得足。²⁰⁸ The text repeatedly mentions upholding the *Shenmiao mimi jingang jie da sanmeiye zongchi dajiao wang cheng fo jing* 深妙秘密金剛界大三昧耶 總持大教王成佛經 (*Sutra of the King of Great Teachings Who Upholds the Great Samādhi of the Profound Secret Vajra Realm's Becoming a Buddha*); this rite's emphasis on a single, highly Esoteric text seems to distinguish it from the mature versions of the Water-Land Retreat, which draw from the whole panoply of sutras popular in mid- to late-imperial China.

Finally, the text explains the conditions under which such altars should be constructed, and the benefits resulting therefrom. We are told that when the borders of the state are not at peace, when the people are diseased, when crazed bandits rise up, when the winds and rain are excessive, or when the five grains do not ripen, then these altars should be built to protect the state and the people, to ensure that bandits cannot bring harm, that diseases naturally subside, that the winds and rains remain in accord with the seasons, that the five grains are abundant, that the people are happy, and that the borders of the state remain peaceful while the benevolent king remains safe.²⁰⁹ The rite thus presents itself more or less as a paradigmatic mid- to late-Tang Esoteric ritual of state protection, though here, such benefits are brought about not through the worship of a specific deity (or mandalic configuration of deities), but through the building of

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 32.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 34.

altars related to a specific text that can assure the heavenly rebirth of all sentient beings.²¹⁰ In a sense, this picture is not too far removed from the goals and scale of the implied ritual underlying Emperor Wu of Liang's "Vows of the Eastern Capital." Here, however, in accordance with the increasing attention paid to hungry ghosts and to the universal salvation of Hell-dwellers in Chinese Buddhism from the mid eighth century onward, the focus is placed on saving masses of anonymous ghosts (unlike Emperor Wu, who focuses on the salvation of deceased members of his own family, as well as personal acquaintances); and the means of realizing these goals has become decidedly Esoteric—again, in fitting with the great innovations in ritual technologies developed during and after the mid eighth century.

"Section Eleven"²¹¹ gives us a second, relatively complete picture of the complexity of another Water-Land-like ritual related to that described above. This section begins by describing the "Altar of [All Beings of] Water and Land, [which] comprises twelve types of Light Altars, ten Wheels of Heaven and Wheels of Earth, an Altar of the Eight Directions, an Altar of the Five Buddhas, and an Altar of Opening Awakening 水陸之壇有十二種燈壇，十個天輪地輪，八方之壇，五佛之壇，開啟之壇."²¹² The altar includes the Eight Bodhisattvas and Eight *Vajrapāṇis*, as well as twelve sets of ritual implements, incense, flowers, lights, fruit, food, and drink. At each gate of the altar are to be placed two swords and twelve arrows. A five-colored

²¹⁰ On such rituals of state protection in China, see especially Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

²¹¹ The full title of this section is "Section Eleven: This Altar Is [That Which] the Buddha, at the Vajra Throne of Rājagṛha in the Company of the Myriad *Devas* and Bodhisattvas and 12,000 People, Transmitted to Vajragarbha Bodhisattva to Be Passed Down to Liberate All Sentient Beings 此壇是王舍城金剛座共諸天菩薩萬二千人俱，佛傳授與金剛藏菩薩，遞代相傳，度脫眾生部第十一。"

²¹² P. 3913, 45.

cord is to be used to seal the altar.²¹³ The text asserts that this altar can “liberate all sentient beings, and will allow them all to be reborn in the Heavens 度脫眾生, 總令生天.”²¹⁴ More specifically, the altar and its ritual are meant to benefit those beings whose infinite transgressions have resulted in their being reborn in Hell. To perform this ritual of universal salvation, a Dharma Master of the Tripiṭaka 三藏法主 first bathes and purifies himself and puts on new, pure robes, clothing himself with a seven-treasure kaṣāya and shoes. The benevolent kings who are envisioned to be the sponsors of this ritual are instructed to hold an incense censer in their hands and venerate the Buddha at all hours of the day without pause. One by one, they repent and make vows, mobilizing their kindness and compassion to liberate all sentient beings.²¹⁵

Other sections of the *Forty-Two Methods* give specific instructions for the construction of the Altar of the Five Buddhas (and Eight Bodhisattvas), the Wheels of Heaven and Earth, and the Altar of the Eight Directions.²¹⁶ All of these altars serve purposes related to those mentioned above: the elimination of transgressions over *kalpas* as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges 減恆河沙劫罪,²¹⁷ allowing all hungry ghosts to achieve rebirth in Heaven 一切餓鬼, 總得生天,²¹⁸ and so on. “Section Nine: The Merit of the Water-Land Lamp Altar Spoken by the Buddha 佛說水陸燈壇功德部第九” lists ten particular merits of constructing the Lamp Altar, ranging from illuminating the trichiliochosm 身光遍照三千大千世界, to illuminating the

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 44

²¹⁵ Ibid., 45.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 41-44.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 41.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 42.

myriad beings in the darkness of Hell so that they all may be reborn in Heaven 照黑暗地獄眾生, 總持生天,²¹⁹ to assuring that the ritual's sponsor will have penetrating insight in rebirth after rebirth 生生世世, 眼有光明.²²⁰

Despite the brevity of these liturgical instructions, and despite their almost exclusive use of Esoteric ritual technologies,²²¹ several continuities can be identified between these rudimentary rites and all of the far more expansive Water-Land practices that followed them in the Song and after. Quite clearly, all of these rites share a Mahayanist cosmic universalism. They embrace all beings, they bestow sustenance upon them, and they ensure that those beings will be reborn into the heavenly Pure Land. These rites all focus especially on the liberation of the masses of anonymous ghosts and vengeful spirits that inhabit our world and the Netherworld. Later variants of the Water-Land Retreat—most notably, the northern *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai*—make use of a square, concentrically tiered altar centered on the Buddhas of the Five Directions, which perhaps ultimately derives from the Diamond World Mandala, not terribly different from the mandala described in this ninth-century compendium. Further, all versions of the Water-Land Retreat—from the ninth-century Dunhuang manuscripts to Yirun's nineteenth-century expansion of Zhuhong's manual—include the use of light altars, Wheels of Heaven, and Wheels of Earth.²²² Indeed, light, in particular, seems always to have been a preoccupation of Water-Land practitioners. For example, in his mytho-history of Emperor Wu's composition of

²¹⁹ Ibid., 43.

²²⁰ Ibid., 44.

²²¹ A recent introduction to such practices, as well as an extensive bibliography on the topic, may be found in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), esp. 71-154.

²²² This point is noted in Hou Chong, "Yang E 'Shuilu yi' kao," esp. 17-21.

the first Water-Land manual, Yang E makes light a key motif, saying that Emperor Wu prayed that if the liturgy he composed were correct (and hence, pleasing to the myriad deities), then the extinguished candles in his ritual hall should all spontaneously alight—which we might read as a metaphor for the power of the Water-Land Retreat to illuminate all recesses of the cosmos, especially the Netherworld.²²³ Later Water-Land-related texts routinely refer to the Water-Land Retreat’s universal illumination of places both shaded and bright (i.e., netherworldly and this-worldly) 普照幽顯. Missing from these early Water-Land-related rituals from Dunhuang, however, is any mention of the history of the ritual, the bathing of spirits either saintly or mundane, the bestowal of precepts upon them (though ordination and precept bestowal is the subject of altar-construction methods described in other sections of the *Forty-Two Methods*), and resolutions to attain *bodhicitta*, all of which I suggested earlier to be the hallmarks of the Water-Land Retreat in its mature form. Missing, too, are specific invocations of non-Buddhist spirits. As we will see shortly, it seems likely to have been later compilers who introduced these narratives and practices in the tenth or eleventh century, suggesting that these elements speak to uniquely Song interests.

The text appended to the end of one recension of the *Forty-Two Methods*—namely, Stein 2144—points to further continuities with later Water-Land Retreats, as it includes a list of a cosmic array of spirits invoked during a five-day, five-night ritual sponsored by the Grand Mentor 太傅 of Dunhuang.²²⁴ While not named, this ritual certainly shares the scope of later Water-Land Retreats, a scope far greater than most other rituals in the ninth century. Unlike the highly abbreviated liturgical indications included in the instructions for the construction of altars

²²³ SSTL, 113c.

²²⁴ This title was used by members of the Cao 曹 family, the *de facto* rulers of Dunhuang, during the Return to Righteousness Army period.

in the earlier sections of the *Forty-Two Methods*, this appendix includes somewhat more complete indications regarding when and what offerings were made, when and what litanies were recited, etc. It is, in other words, a text that seems to conform much more closely to the genre of the “ritual manual,” such as those we examined above. Among the deities invoked during this decidedly grand performance were 1) buddhas, 2) bodhisattvas, 3) *pratyekabuddhas* and arhats, 4) *devarājas* and the ghosts that they subjugate, 5) planetary deities, 6) the deities of mountains and rivers, 7) protector spirits (of pagodas, monasteries, etc.), 8) King Yama, 9) various ghost kings, 10) the Departmental Lord of Mt. Tai, 11) *yakṣas*, etc.²²⁵ All of these spirits were called to bear witness to the merit generated by the performance of this ritual, as well as to the patron’s resolution to attain *bodhicitta*, and to his acts of repentance. Various *yakṣas*, saintly ghosts, dragon kings, and nature spirits were then called to receive offerings.²²⁶ Orphan ghosts that lived within the human world among tombs and cemeteries were then assembled to receive separate offerings, with the hope that they would be reborn in the Pure Land and would protect the people of Shazhou 沙洲 (Dunhuang).²²⁷ Other ghosts—those that cause disease—, it was hoped, would be assembled at the ritual site to be returned to their true place of origin by the sounds of the sutras recited during this ritual.²²⁸ This text thus takes us even closer to the content of mid-and late-imperial Water-Land practices. Not only do the deities invoked cover all dimensions of time and space, not only has the ritual expanded to cover five full days, not only does it send orphan ghosts to be reborn in the Pure Land, but also the ritual has come to be seen

²²⁵ P. 3193, 137-140.

²²⁶ Ibid., 140-142.

²²⁷ Ibid., 142-143.

²²⁸ Ibid., 144: “Following the sounds of the sutras, epidemics are swept away; following the sounds of the spells, [the demons] eternally return to their place of origin 隨經聲癘疾消除，逐咒音永歸本所。”

to have the power to exorcise malevolent spirits. By liberating these malevolent spirits, the ritual is capable of alleviating the forms of suffering both physiological and psychological understood to be wrought by ghosts that intervene unseen in the human world. As we will see in the following chapter, this exorcistic function came to dominate Song practices of the Water-Land Retreat.

A Modular, Esoteric Aside

Before leaving behind these Esoteric rituals, a related, albeit significantly simpler, manual also attributed to Amoghavajra (here transcribed phonetically as Amojia 阿謨伽 rather than translated as Bukong 不空) should be mentioned briefly, for it hints at the cosmic modularity that was later to characterize the Water-Land Retreat itself. This is the *Yanluo wang gong xingfa cidì* 焰羅王供行法次第 (*Steps of the Method for the Offering to King Yama*), a manual that presents a general method for making offerings to King Yama and four other kings in the netherworldly bureaucracy on behalf of suffering ghosts and Hell-dwellers.²²⁹ While the primary goal of the ritual is not necessarily the universal salvation of the scale found in the Water-Land Retreat, the ritual nevertheless involves summoning all of the beings of the cosmos; specific buddhas, bodhisattvas, and members of the infernal bureaucracy are all summoned by name, while members of the celestial and terrestrial bureaucracies are invoked in a more abbreviated manner according to their general class of being. The manual also gives precise textual instructions regarding the mantras and mudras to be employed in summoning. Ultimately,

²²⁹ Attrib. Amoghavajra 阿謨伽 (705-774), *Yanluo wang gong xingfa cidì* 焰羅王供行法次第, in T21, no. 1290. This text has been briefly discussed in relation to the Water-Land Retreat—in particular, in relation to the burning of paper offerings, mentioned in *ibid.*, 374a—in Hong Jinchun 洪錦淳, “Fojiao ‘Shuilu fahui’ dui Daojiao wenhua de rongshe 佛教「水陸法會」對道教文化的融攝,” *Chung Hsing Journal of Humanities* 興大人文學報 34, no. 1 (June 2004): 123-151.

Kṣitigarbha is invoked to aid in saving and feeding the ghosts and Hell-dwellers, and also to repent on their behalf.

In all of this, the ritual presents itself as little more than a rite of the bestowal of food to hungry ghosts, texts of a type that Amoghavajra translated or composed on a number of occasions. Rather interestingly, however, the final section of this manual includes instructions on altering the rite to achieve particular ends. For example, if one wishes to rid oneself of various illnesses, one is directed to make additional offerings to the Sovereign of the Bureau of Mt. Tai 太山府君; if one wishes to free oneself from the curses of evil people, one should make offerings to Brahma 大梵王 and the Four Heavenly Kings 四天王; if one wishes to gain good fortune, one is to make offerings to the Twenty-Eight Great *Yakṣas* 二十八大藥叉; etc.²³⁰ The manual thus builds in a certain degree of modularity; specific ritual acts based on offerings to particular deities can be added or subtracted from the ritual according to the needs or desires of the sponsor. In this infernal offering, then, we may have a prefiguration of the late-imperial Water-Land Retreats, which, as we saw, are at once cosmic and decidedly modular.

Nondiscriminatory Assemblies in Yunnan and Japan

A similarly grand ritual seemingly related to the earliest of Esoteric Water-Land Retreats seems also to have been performed in the southwestern Chinese regions of Sichuan and Yunnan in the Five Dynasties and Song periods, as well as in Japan from the ninth century onward. A single-fascicle hand-written manuscript manual, entitled the *Guangshi wuzhe daochang yi* 廣施無遮道場儀 (*Manual of the Nondiscriminatory Altar of Broad Bestowal*), was recovered in August 1956 from the ancestral shrine of the Dong family 董氏宗祠 in Beitangtian Village 北湯

²³⁰ *Yanluo wang gong xingfa cidi*, 376a-376b.

天村, Fengyi Town 鳳儀鎮, in the Bai Autonomous Region of Dali 大理白族自治州 in Yunnan Province.²³¹ The manuscript is currently held in the collection of the Yunnan Provincial Library in Kunming. The text was part of a cache of more than three thousand manuscripts and printed booklets dating from the Dali Kingdom to the Republican period, many of which have been used in recent years by Hou Chong and other scholars—including, for a period, John McRae—to reconstruct the local Yunnanese form of Esoteric Buddhist practice known as “Ācārya Teachings 阿吒力教.”²³² Although recovered from the more southwesterly region of Yunnan, the text includes specific references to Sichuan, leading some scholars to conjecture that the manuscript is a copy of a manual that initially circulated in Sichuan, which was never controlled by the Dali Kingdom.²³³

This Yunnanese manual for the Nondiscriminatory Retreat seems to share a number of important similarities with the contemporaneous Dunhuang materials that we examined above. Most obviously, these various materials share an insistent Esotericism. The Yunnanese manual begins by summoning the deities of the “Buddha-Tathāgata Assembly 佛如來部,” the “Lotus Assembly of the Buddha-Mothers 佛母蓮花部,” and the “Vajra Assembly of True Wisdom 真智金剛部”—that is, the three constituent deity groupings of the Womb-World Mandala 胎藏界曼荼羅; as we saw above, the Dunhuang materials, on the other hand, seem to fall into the lineage of the Diamond World Mandala, as do later manuals, such as the northern *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*. Interestingly, a seemingly related Japanese Tendai 天台-school practice, known

²³¹ GSWZ.

²³² Sadly, McRae did not publish any of his research on these materials. Megan Bryson, now at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, has also recently been working on contemporary Ācārya practices among the Bai 白 people in Yunnan.

²³³ See GSWZ, 36a.

by the Kamakura 鎌倉 period (1185-1333) as the “Myōdō ku 冥道供” (“Offering to the Netherworldly Path”) ²³⁴ but first brought to Japan from Tang China by the ninth-century pilgrims Saichō 最澄 (ca. 767-822) ²³⁵ and Enchin 円珍 (814-891) ²³⁶ under the title of the “Myōdō mucha sai 冥道無遮齋” (“Nondiscriminatory Retreat of the Netherworldly Path”), also specifically makes use of the Womb World Mandala. ²³⁷ Given that neither the Yunnanese nor Japanese manuals refer to “Water and Land” in their titles and lack any reference to the salient feature of the Water-Land Retreat—namely, its ostensible origin at the hand of Emperor Wu of Liang—, one must ask whether the Water-Land Retreat and the Nondiscriminatory Retreat originated in different conceptions of the cosmos, with the Water-Land Retreat fundamentally deriving from Diamond World practices, and the Nondiscriminatory Retreat deriving from Womb World practices. Despite this possible difference in mandalic origin, however, the rituals share a number of similarities, as we shall see below.

Although missing its beginning and ending sections, the Yunnan manual preserves relatively complete instructions for performing the ritual it describes, recording the actions to be performed, the deities to be invoked, and listing the mantras and litanies to be recited. The extant portion of the text begins by invoking the aforementioned Esoteric deities to receive

²³⁴ *Asaba shō* 阿婆縛抄, compiled by Shōchō 承澄 (1205-1281), fasc. 66-68, in TZ9, no. 3190, 527b-548b.

²³⁵ Saichō’s *Denkyō daishi shōrai Esshū roku* 傳教大師將來越州錄, in T55, no. 2150, 1058c, mentions a “single-fascicle method for the Nondiscriminatory Retreat of the Netherworldly Path (with an appended single-fascicle homa ritual manual) 冥道無遮齋法一卷 (加火吽儀軌一卷). *Asaba shō*, fasc. 66, TZ9, no. 3190, 538c, identifies Saichō’s manual as the authentic source of the Japanese ritual practice.

²³⁶ See Annen 安然 (ca. 841-ca. 915), *Sho ajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄, fasc. 2, in T55, no. 2176, 1129a. *Asaba shō*, fasc. 66, in TZ9, no. 3190, 538c, denigrates the addition of some vernacular phrasing to this manual, though it notes that the “Superintendent of Monks Daigen 大原僧都”—that is, the important mid-Heian (794-1185) Tendai monk Chōen 長宴 (1016-1081)—used it as the basis for some of his private performances of the ritual, and consequently, the manual widely circulated among “the people of the world.”

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 538b.

offerings.²³⁸ Offerings of flowers are then presented,²³⁹ and the ritual space is sealed, ensuring its protection. The central deities are summoned²⁴⁰ and spell water is empowered.²⁴¹ Next, a series of homilies on nondiscriminatory bestowal²⁴² and the powers of Esotericism are delivered.²⁴³ Buddhist saints—from the loftiest of buddhas to arhats and immortals of the five penetrations—are all summoned²⁴⁴ and offerings are made.²⁴⁵ Various terrestrial and celestial deities are invoked, as are members of the infernal bureaucracy and the ghosts of the sponsor's family.²⁴⁶ The lower beings of the ghostly realms are then invoked, and offerings are presented to them.²⁴⁷ These myriad beings are then led in vowing to attain *bodhicitta*,²⁴⁸ and dharma sustenance is bestowed upon them.²⁴⁹ Next, they are led in performing universal repentance,²⁵⁰

²³⁸ GSWZ, 360-361.

²³⁹ Ibid., 361.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 361-362.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 362.

²⁴² Ibid., 363-364.

²⁴³ Ibid., 364.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 364-365.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 365-366.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 366-367.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 368.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 369.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 369-370.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 370-371.

and alimentary sustenance is bestowed.²⁵¹ Ultimately, they are taken to worship the saints and sages before they are sent off to their new path of existence.²⁵²

As the above outline suggests, the ritual seems to share the cosmic pretensions of the unnamed five-day ritual performed in the same period at Dunhuang. Buddhas, bodhisattvas, *yakṣas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, arhats, immortals of the five penetrations, *asuras*,²⁵³ *devas*, dragons, stars and planets, topographic deities (of the rivers, seas, mountains, etc.), weather deities, Daoist divinatory stars, local deities (house, city, and regional protectors), King Yama, ghosts, ancestors, and deceased clerics are all summoned.²⁵⁴ The list corresponds quite closely to the list of the classes of deities summoned at Dunhuang; furthermore, many are also identical to those depicted by Zhang Nanben in Sichuan in the same period. Moreover, the Japanese recension of the Nondiscriminatory Retreat includes a total of two hundred deities invoked over the course of three days (though fewer can be summoned over a shorter period of time depending on the needs and resources of the patron²⁵⁵), the general classes of which are the same as those evoked in both the Yunnanese manuscript and the appendix to the Dunhuang *Forty-Two Methods*. Importantly, all three of these texts include distinctly non-Buddhist figures, figures both Daoist and vernacular, something that we saw neither in Emperor Wu's "Vows of the Eastern Capital" nor in the main body of the *Forty-Two Methods*. This seems to suggest that it was, precisely, in the ninth to

²⁵¹ Ibid., 371.

²⁵² Ibid., 371-372.

²⁵³ Ibid., 364-365.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 366-367.

²⁵⁵ *Asaba shō*, fasc. 66, in TZ9, no. 3190, 528c; a full diagram of the placement of these myriad deities within the ritual space is given in *ibid.*, 529. *Ibid.*, 530a, mentions deities that can be included in the ritual but that are not counted among the canonical two hundred. The litanies for invoking the deities are given in *ibid.*, 532b-533c; a variant liturgy, based on a performance by Chōen in a space that was too small to accommodate tablets for all two hundred deities, is given in *ibid.*, fasc. 67, 541a-542b.

tenth centuries that the highly syncretic ritual paradigm best exemplified in the Water-Land Retreat began to take shape. Indeed, it seems that in the ninth to tenth centuries, rituals identifying themselves as “Water-Land” or “Nondiscriminatory” Retreats, which involved the summoning of Buddhist, Daoist, and vernacular deities, coexisted with Nondiscriminatory Retreats that included solely Buddhist figures.²⁵⁶ This seems to further cement the notion that it was precisely this moment that saw the genesis of the modern ritual.

Several further features of the Yunnan manuscript are worth emphasizing. First, the manual explicitly distinguishes the summoning of saintly 聖 deities (that is, Buddhist deities both awakened and non-) from mundane 凡 spirits. Although the manual does not specifically identify sections of the ritual space as “Upper” or “Lower Halls,” there nevertheless seems to be a binary distinction made between these general classes of beings, much as we see in the mature Water-Land Retreat.²⁵⁷ Such a distinction most likely derives from the common Mahayanist conception of the Ten Realms of beings in the cosmos 十界, consisting of four categories of saints—buddhas, bodhisattvas, *śrāvakas*, and *pratyekabuddhas*—and six paths of mundane beings—*devas*, humans, *asuras*, animals, hungry ghosts, and Hell-dwellers. Yet the Yunnanese manual also uses the terms “upper” and “lower” to refer to these saintly and mundane groupings, bringing it quite close to the later Water-Land manuals. For example, in the section on the offering the ambrosia of the dharma, the text includes a couplet that speaks of “the clouds of the

²⁵⁶ For example, *Zhida Jinling xin zhi* 至大金陵新志, compiled by Zhang Xuan 張鉉 (act. ca. 1310), “Zuanxiu 纂修,” fasc. 14, 5909b, in HJDZ, mentions the performance of a seven-day and seven-night Nondiscriminatory Assembly involving Indian monks during the Southern Tang dynasty (937-975). Given the specific inclusion of such non-Chinese monastic figures, it seems likely that the ritual performed would be closer to the earlier Nondiscriminatory Assembly of previous dynasties, which itself was modeled on the Indian Pañcavarṣika, than to the later Water-Land Retreat.

²⁵⁷ A tertiary grouping—that solely of ghosts—may perhaps also be identified. Zongze follows such a tripartite division in his 1096 revision of Yang E’s manual.

saints above approaching the oceanic assembly, while the mists of the commoners below assemble at the fragrant pool 上聖雲臨海會，下凡霧集香湯.”²⁵⁸ Although the Dunhuang appendix summons spirits in hierarchical order from most exalted to most mundane, it never conceptualizes them in such a binary manner.

Second, it is in the Yunnanese ritual that we first see the inclusion of a section of the liturgy devoted specifically to the patrons’ making resolutions to attain *bodhicitta* 發(菩提)心—or more specifically, resolutions to “put forth 發” certain aspects of their minds. Four such mindsets are mentioned: the bodhi mind 菩提心, the zealous mind 精進心, the vast mind 廣大心, and the great compassionate mind 大悲心.²⁵⁹ These resolutions were to become a central element in later Water-Land Retreats. As we will shortly see, Yang E, for example, included four such mind-related resolutions in his eleventh-century Water-Land manual, preserving the four mentioned here with the exception of the zealous mind, which he replaces with the mind of the great vow 大願心.²⁶⁰

Third, the Yunnanese liturgy includes a brief mention of Ānanda in conjunction with the practice of broad bestowal 廣施, for it was Ānanda to whom the Buddha first transmitted the methods for the performance of rites of food bestowal to hungry ghosts.²⁶¹ Ānanda, as we saw earlier, was to become a key mytho-historical progenitive figure to be evoked in all

²⁵⁸ GSWZ, 365. The use of cloud and mist imagery here is somewhat intriguing. Cloud and mist imagery recurs frequently throughout the text, as well as periodically in some of the Dunhuang materials. As I will argue in Part 2 of this dissertation, it seems likely that such imagery greatly preoccupied the artists who were tasked with creating icons for use in such ceremonies. Indeed, the presence of clouds seems to be a defining feature of much Water-Land-related imagery in the Song and after.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 369.

²⁶⁰ SSTL, 116b.

²⁶¹ GSWZ, 363.

performances of the Water-Land Retreat; yet surprisingly, we have not seen him mentioned in any earlier manual for these rituals that are, fundamentally, all rites of food bestowal.

Lacking, however, from the Yunnanese ritual is any mention of the bathing of spirits, especially ghosts, the breaking of the bounds of Hell, or the bestowal of precepts upon the purified spirits. The ritual also seems to lack a liturgical endscene during which to send spirits to be reborn in the Pure Land, though it seems likely that that section of the text simply does not survive in the slightly fragmented extant manuscript. It is worth noting that the contemporaneous Japanese Nondiscriminatory Retreat also lacks scenes of bathing, and its precept-bestowal segment is decidedly abbreviated compared to later versions. Oddly, too, it lacks an occasion for the making of mind-related resolutions. It does, however, more or less divide deities into “upper” and “lower” groupings, though its upper grouping seems to consist only of awakened Buddhist beings, whereas its lower grouping encompasses all other spirits summoned to the assembly, including protective deities that later variants of the Water-Land Retreat recognize as “saintly.”

Conclusion

From the above analyses, it becomes quite clear that a ritual practice bearing distinct similarities to the modern (Song and after) practice of the Water-Land Retreat emerged during the late Tang to Five Dynasties periods. This practice—or rather, these practices, for it is clear that multiple related, though not entirely commensurable, practices simultaneously existed—was performed throughout the disintegrating Tang empire, from Dunhuang in the northwest, to Sichuan and Yunnan in the southwest, to Anhui and Jiangsu in the southeast. By the end of the Five Dynasties period, the scene was set for the mature emergence of an all-encompassing Buddhist ritual of universal salvation.

Of course, there remains the question of why it was precisely at this moment that rituals whose performative and functional profiles closely resemble that of the Water-Land Retreat emerged. As far as I have been able to determine, no contemporary texts survive to give us direct insight into period perceptions of the rise of the ritual. However, the chronology of the development of the Water-Land Retreat, as well as the concurrent development of mortuary rites centered on the Ten Kings of Purgatory and related Daoist rituals such as the “Huanglu zhai 黃錄齋” (“Retreat of the Yellow Register”), which, as noted above in footnote 186, was recodified by Du Guangting during the final decades of the ninth century, allow us to speculate on the matter with a certain degree of certainty. To sketch the scenario in the broadest terms—terms that cry out for more careful research in the future—, the late Tang through Five Dynasties saw a concurrence of historical phenomena that made the emergence, codification, or recodification of rituals of universal, and particularly post-mortem, salvation, as well as more specifically mortuary rites, all but inevitable. As is well known, from the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion of 755 to 763 onward, the Tang empire was wracked by war, both internal and external. The capital of Chang’an was sacked repeatedly, both by native rebels and by foreign armies from Tibet and elsewhere. Provincial governors gained increasing autonomy, establishing semi-independent militarized states. While Emperors Daizong 代宗 (727-779; r. 762-779) and Dezong 德宗 (742-805; r. 779-805) succeeded in regaining some central control over the empire in the latter decades of the eighth century, by the beginning of the ninth century, warlordism was again on the rise. Subsequently, Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (778-820; r. 805-820) succeeded in briefly reunifying the state again during the second decade of the ninth century, yet his successors generally failed to maintain that centralized control, ultimately leading to the abandonment of the capital twice during the reign of Emperor Xizong and the eventual dissolution of the Tang state

in the first decade of the tenth century. Quite simply, the Tang empire was characterized by almost incessant war from 755 onward. Battlefields were filled with unburied corpses, and ghosts, not surprisingly, became an issue of great period concern. Ghost stories and ghost paintings appeared in great numbers than ever before. In an era characterized by complete social instability, filled with masses of the unburied dead, and obsessed with the incursion of the supernatural into the human world, it is perhaps no surprise that rituals meant to deal precisely with such phenomena—rituals meant to restore balance to the relationship among gods, ghosts, and humans—would take shape in such great numbers.

Moreover, this period saw the large-scale persecution of Buddhism during the reign of Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (814-846; r. 840-846), which resulted in the vast destruction of Buddhist temples, icons, and texts; furthermore, the Huang Chao Rebellion of the 880s led to the destruction of the Daoist Canons held in the capitals of Luoyang and Chang'an. Du Guangting, who recompiled the liturgy for the Retreat of the Yellow Register at the turn of the ninth century, implicitly acknowledges in a postface to his new manual that he was working in response to the destruction of the canons; he seems to have relied on copies of Daoist texts held in abbeys in Sichuan, to which he had fled with the court of Emperor Xizong, to reconstitute the texts whose loss he so deplored.²⁶² In other words, much of the textual and liturgical invention that we readily note in late-Tang and Five Dynasties Sichuan, and perhaps in China more generally, likely emerged in response to the vast destruction of resources during this war-torn period. While Du's work may superficially appear conservative—he ostensibly was restoring what was lost—it inevitably involved experimentation, invention, and expansion; he revitalized past liturgical practices in order to make them more relevant to contemporary concerns and to bring

²⁶² See Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933), "Wushang huanglu dazhai houshu 無上黃籙大齋後述," in QTW, fasc. 944, 9810b-9811a. This is briefly discussed in Schipper, "Taishang huanglu zhaiyi," in *The Taoist Canon*, 578-580.

them into line with current popular practices (just as succeeding generations of Daoists did with his own text, which now survives only in a substantially revised version), ultimately creating a ritual that could be used for a vast range of purposes. Much like the early practitioners of the Water-Land Retreat, he undoubtedly innovated while drawing on earlier models.

The need for new texts and rituals to replace those that were lost over the course of the ninth century, coupled with the need for rituals to deal with the ever-increasing masses of unburied dead, can only have led to the invention and recodification of rituals such as the Water-Land Retreat and the Retreat of the Yellow Register. Drawing on earlier models, either well-established—such as the Retreat of the Yellow Register, which had been performed since the fifth century—or more various—such as the assortment of Mahayanist and Esoteric rituals that seem to be at the base of the Water-Land Retreat—, late-Tang and Five Dynasties ritualists pieced together modular liturgies of universal salvation that would rise to society-wide popularity in the Song, becoming ever more complex as they were appropriated by regional and sectarian partisans.

CHAPTER 1.3 | Universal Efficacy: The Practice, Function, and Vision of the Water-Land Retreat in the Song

Introduction

As we have seen, the documentary record for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat both before and after the Song dynasty is surprisingly clear. From the manuscripts, anecdotes, and epigraphic materials that survive from before the Song, we know that a highly complex ritual of universal salvation known as the Water-Land Retreat began to take shape in the ninth century; from the many post-Song ritual manuals that survive from regions across China and Korea, we see that by the fifteenth century, the ritual was widely performed by followers of a variety of sectarian traditions. The situation during the Song dynasty, however, is somewhat more vexing. On the one hand, a great number of references to the Water-Land Retreat survive in materials such as the miscellaneous jottings of scholar-officials, collections of tales of the supernatural, and even official histories. On the other hand, no complete manual—nor even a manual as complete as the fragmented Yunnanese manuscript examined above—survives from the Song, unless one uncritically treats Zhipan and Zhuhong’s text as a Song work. Consequently, it becomes rather difficult to talk concretely about Song practices of the ritual, though it becomes somewhat easier to reconstruct its place in Song society and in what might be more generally termed the Song *imaginaire*.²⁶³ Several scholars have attempted such a reconstruction of the social place of various liturgies in the Song over the course of the past decade, though they have focused primarily on Daoist or vernacular religious traditions, only addressing the Water-Land Retreat in passing.²⁶⁴ However, by examining the wide array of sources mentioned above—

²⁶³ On the Song religious *imaginaire*, see Mihwa Choi, “Contesting *Imaginaires* in Death Rituals during the Northern Song Dynasty,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2008, esp. 10-17.

²⁶⁴ See, for example, Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, esp. 236-241; Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles:

everything from the writings of scholar-officials to fragments of liturgical manuals, and from cliff carvings to hanging scrolls—in a more sustained manner, I believe we can weave a more satisfying, complex, tapestry-like vision of Song-dynasty practices of the Water-Land Retreat than has hitherto been given. I will begin with a reconsideration of the canonical sources used in the study of the Song Water-Land Retreat—largely Buddhist compendia—and then will move on to literary and epigraphic materials that demonstrate more clearly the open, modular, malleable syntax that I see as the defining feature of the ritual in the Song and after. Finally, I will shift my attention to the art-historical materials that will be the focus of the remainder of this dissertation. I will argue that throughout the Song, the malleable, modular nature of the Water-Land Retreat allowed it to be repurposed to fulfill a variety of functions that far exceeded its primary role as a ritual of universal salvation. Indeed, I shall show that it was precisely because of its malleable syntax, and cosmic pretensions, that the Water-Land Retreat came to occupy a preeminent place in the lives of Song lay Buddhists.

Yang E and the Initial Codification of the Water-Land Retreat

Besides Zhuhong's revised edition of Zhipan's late-Southern-Song manual, at present, we can identify sections of only two Water-Land Retreat manuals whose Song *bona fides* are incontrovertible—the layman Yang E's three-fascicle *Shuili yi* 水陸儀 (*Methods of the Water-Land [Retreat]*),²⁶⁵ which seems to have been composed prior to 1071,²⁶⁶ and a section of the

University of California Press, 2004), esp. 130-179; Matsumoto Kōichi 松本浩一, *Sōdai no Dōkyō to minkan shrinkō* 宋代の道教と民間信仰 (Tokyo: Kyūko-shoin, 2006), 139-145; idem, "Songdai de Shuili zhai yu Huanglu zhai," 641-654; and especially Choi, 219-299, who surveys texts related to the Water-Land Retreat in greatest detail.

²⁶⁵ The canonically recognized sections of Yang E's manual are included in SSTL, 113c-114b and 116b-118c.

²⁶⁶ See SSTL, 114b, which records the text of the "Shuili dazhai lingji ji 水陸大齋靈跡記" ("Record of the Numinous Traces of the Great Retreat of [All Beings of] Water and Land"), a stele at Jin shan that was composed by Yang E in 1071 and reinscribed in 1125. There is no direct proof that the text of the stele comes directly from Yang E's *manual*; the stele text could simply be a separate composition by Yang E. However, given that Yang E was asked to furnish this stele text at Jin shan in 1071, it seems likely that his manual must have already been in wide

monk Zongze's four-fascicle revision of Yang E's manual from 1096.²⁶⁷ The extant sections of Yang E's text are decidedly more complete than Zongze's, which includes only his account of the origins of the ritual. Yang E's extant writings include his "Shuilu dazhai lingji ji 水陸大齋靈跡記" ("Record of the Numinous Traces of the Great Retreat of [All Beings] of Water and Land"), an account of the history of the ritual (which was not necessarily copied directly from his manual, but which likely derived from it); the "Churu daochoang xu jian Shuilu yi 初入道場敘建水陸意" ("First Entering the Ritual Enclosure to State the Meaning of Constructing a Water-Land [Altar]"), a homily on the purpose of establishing performing a Water-Land Retreat, which is to be recited upon first entering the ritual space for the performance of the liturgy; the "Xuanbai zhaoqing shangtang bawei shengzhong 宣白召請上堂八位聖眾" ("Announcing the Summoning of the Saintly Masses of the Eight Seats of the Upper Hall") and the "Xuanbai zhaoqing xiatang bawei shengfan 宣白召請下堂八位聖凡" ("Announcing the Summoning of the Saints and Commoners of the Eight Seats of the Lower Hall"), the invocations to be recited when summoning the deities of the eight positions of the Upper and Lower Halls; and the

circulation by this date. The thirteenth-century *Shimen zhengtong*, however, records that Yang E compiled his manual during the Xining 熙寧 era (1068-1077) and that it circulated in Sichuan, which raises the question of how it could have come to be seen as authoritative in the distant region of Jiangnan in three years or fewer. See *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, fasc. 4, in X75, no. 1513, 304a.

²⁶⁷ SSTL, 114b-115a. Hou Chong, "Yang E 'Shuilu yi' kao," 7-11, suggests that much of the content of Zongze's "Shuilu yuanqi 水陸緣起" ("Origins of the Water-Land [Retreat]") was taken from Yang E's *Shuilu yi*. This is suggested by two interlinear notes, one of which lists sutras consulted by Emperor Wu of Liang (see SSTL, 114c) and the second of which, included toward the end of the text, has been interpreted by Hou to mean that *all* of the preceding text derives from Yang E's manual. See SSTL, 115a: "This is what is recorded in the *Methods of the Water-Land [Retreat]* by Yang E of eastern Sichuan 此是東川楊鏐《水陸儀》所載." However, the "this 此" in this note is decidedly ambiguous; it is unclear whether it indicates all of the preceding text, some parts of it, or simply the basic events of the history. Given that Zongze's account opens with the division of the deities invoked during the ritual into three separate groups, which seems to contradict Yang E's binary division recorded in SSTL, 116c-118b, I am inclined to disagree with Hou's interpretation and see Zongze as simply following Yang E's general account of the history of the ritual. Hou recently revised his earlier opinion in Hou Chong, "Hongji zhi fanyi."

“Shuilu zhai yiwen houxu 水陸齋儀文後序” (“Postface to the Manual for the Water-Land Retreat”), the author’s own postface to the manual, which gives some indication of when, where, and by whom the ritual should be performed.²⁶⁸

As we have already seen above, Yang E’s account of the history of the Water-Land Retreat—as recorded in the Jin shan stele, which presumably is an abbreviated version of the account he included in his manual—seems to be the first dated text to associate references to Emperor Wu²⁶⁹ and Chan Master Ying with the Water-Land Retreat; it is, in other words, the earliest text in any Water-Land manual to actually give the ritual a history to be recited during its performance, something that has since become an essential component in all modern performances of the liturgy. Yang E’s stele account gives further details regarding the precise textual bases for the ritual, mentioning that eleven sutras and *śāstras* were used by Emperor Wu to compose the first Water-Land manual.²⁷⁰ Zongze quotes this section of Yang E’s manual more completely, listing the following ten (rather than eleven) texts as the liturgy’s doctrinal bases: the *Avataṃsaka Sutra* 華嚴經, the *Ratnakūṭa Sutra* 寶積經, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sutra* 涅槃經, the *Sutra of the Mantra of Great Brightness* (that is, the *Heart Sutra*) 大明神呪經, the

²⁶⁸ Stevenson, 62, n. 17, claims that the “Huqian zhaoqing qibai 斛前召請啟白” (“Explanation of the Invocations before the [Offerings of] Grain”), in SSTL, 118c-119a, was also penned by Yang E, although the author of the text is not indicated in the SSTL.

²⁶⁹ An undated stele regarding the reconstruction of Zhaojue Monastery 昭覺寺 in Chengdu penned by the Sichuanese scholar-official Li Tian 李旼 (*jinshi* 992; act. until ca. 1068-1077), which includes references to events of the 1030s, speaks of “preparing the rite of [all beings] of Water and Land, and propagating the teachings of [Emperor] Wu of Liang 備水陸之儀，宣梁武教.” Given that Li Tian was active until the Xining 熙寧 era, when Yang E is thought to have composed his manual, it is possible that this text is essentially contemporaneous with Yang E’s account. Given that this stele was composed by a Sichuanese official for a temple in Sichuan, and given that Yang E, too, was a judge in eastern Sichuan, it further seems likely that the linking of the Water-Land Retreat to Emperor Wu originated in Sichuan. The next earliest references I have found linking Emperor Wu to the Water-Land Retreat occur in writings by Su Shi, another Sichuanese follower of the Buddha, dating to the 1090s. See, for example, Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), “Shuilu faxiang zan 水陸法像贊,” in QSW, fasc. 1989, vol. 91, 364-368.

²⁷⁰ SSTL, 113c.

Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment 大圓覺經, the *Daśacakra Sutra* 十輪經, the *Śūraṅgama Sutra* 佛頂經, the *Dhāraṇī Sutra for Saving the Burning-Mouth Hungry Ghosts* 面然經, the *Sutra on the Bestowal of Ambrosial Water* 施甘露水經, and the *Susiddhikaramahātantrasādhanopāyīkapaṭala Sutra* 蘇悉地經.²⁷¹ Many of these texts were first translated during the Tang dynasty, thus precluding the possibility that Emperor Wu could have relied on them to pen the first Water-Land liturgy.²⁷² However, this list likely gives us a Song understanding of the principal doctrinal bases of the ritual, and, in a sense, of its cosmic and combinatory nature. The above texts include works fundamental to both the Mahayana and Esoteric traditions. They deal specifically with the saving of hungry ghosts and with the various unnamed spirits whose saving became a Song obsession, as well as with the role of Kṣitigarbha in that salvific process. The *Susiddhikaramahātantrasādhanopāyīkapaṭala Sutra* further gives very specific instructions on Esoteric altar construction, reinforcing the link between the highly esotericized Water-Land altar construction instructions found at Dunhuang and the practices that have been passed down to us in the Ming, Qing, and Joseon Water-Land manuals.

Yang E's homily on the meaning or purpose of performing the Water-Land Retreat includes intriguing links to Five Dynasties Water-Land practice and, specifically, to the Yunnanese manual for the performance of Nondiscriminatory Retreat. Much as in those earlier manuals, in this section of his text, Yang E explains the four types of mindsets that are to be the object of the resolutions of practitioners of the Water-Land Retreat. These are the *bodhicitta* mind 菩提心, the vast mind 廣大心, the mind of great vowing 大願心, and the mind of great compassion 大悲心. For each of these, he gives metaphoric glosses, saying that the *bodhicitta*

²⁷¹ Ibid., 114c.

²⁷² See Hou Chong, "Yang E 'Shuilu yi' kao," 7.

mind is the “ritual space 道場,” wherein one realizes the non-duality of buddha and non-buddha—in other words, where one awakens to one’s inherent buddha-nature. The vast mind is the “dharma assembly 法會,” whereby the practitioner vows to promulgate the Buddha’s dharma after his *parinirvāṇa*. The mind of great vowing is glossed as the practice of “offering 供養,” whereby the practitioner ensures the liberation of all sentient beings, as well as their bearing witness to this act of infinite compassion. Finally, he describes the mind of great compassion as the “dharma wealth 法財,” whereby the practitioner stands in for those suffering in Hell and rededicates the merit generated through his performance of the Water-Land Retreat to save all sentient beings. Yang E concludes by saying that those who persist in making these resolutions know that this assembly is different from others, and that it will assemble infinite, boundless merit. Similar metaphoric glosses are also included in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*.²⁷³

The classes of deities invoked by Yang E will not appear in any way surprising given the texts we have examined above. However, it is worth citing the complete list of the names of the spirits he summons, as the list was to expand rapidly very shortly after he completed his manual.²⁷⁴ Yang E lists the positions of the Upper Hall as follows: 1) the buddhas; 2) the dharma; 3) the sangha; 4) bodhisattvas; 5) *pratyekabuddhas*; 6) arhats; 7) spirits and immortals of the five penetrations; and 8) dharma-protecting *devas* and dragons. The Lower Hall includes 1) officials and their attendants; 2) the various *devas* of the three realms; 3) *asuras*; 4) humans; 5) hungry ghosts; 6) animals; 7) Hell-dwellers; and 8) beings outside of the Six Paths. Not surprisingly, Yang E’s Sichuanese compatriot Su Shi used these same categories when writing

²⁷³ See TDMY, fasc. 1, 39b.

²⁷⁴ See also Appendix 1 of this dissertation.

his poetic eulogies for paintings employed in the ritual during the 1090s,²⁷⁵ one of which—that for arhats—is inscribed at Miaogao shan 妙高山 in Dazu County.²⁷⁶ Further, the eight seats of each of these halls are identical to those listed in the *Chongguang shuilu wuzhe fashi dazhai yiwen* published in Yunnan in 1379, and we can imagine that the “principal eight seats 正八位” and “lower eight seats 下八位” mentioned in some sections of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* also derive from Yang E’s text. And, of course, this same bi-partite structure was also adopted, and expanded, by Zhipan and Zhuhong in their *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui*. It is clear, then, that Yang E’s liturgy served as one of the two primary models for the structure of the pantheons invoked in later variants of the Water-Land Retreat, regardless of their regional or sectarian affiliation. Ultimately, however, this bipartite schema derives from the Buddhist conception of the Ten Realms 十界,²⁷⁷ which consist of the four enlightened paths of buddhas, bodhisattvas, *pratyekabuddhas*, and arhats, and the six mundane paths of *devas*, humans, *asuras*, animals, hungry ghosts, and Hell-dwellers. Yang E has reconfigured this schema only slightly, adding the Three Treasures and certain protective deities to the Upper Hall, and adding the very important class of beings outside of the Six Paths—that is, wandering spirits—to the Lower Hall.

Yang E’s postface provides some intriguing supplementary information that may help us to imagine the actual experience of—or at least the settings of and personnel involved in—Song performances of the ritual. After reaffirming the fundamental non-duality of the awakened and non-, as well as the nondiscriminatory nature of his ritual, he tells us that “for all retreats, the best sites are surrounded by rivers and mountains and supported by wild jungles. The [day of the]

²⁷⁵ Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), “Shuilu faxiang zan 水陸法像贊,” in QSW, fasc. 1989, vol. 91, 364-368.

²⁷⁶ See the Introduction to this dissertation.

²⁷⁷ See Appendix 1.

full moon [i.e., the fifteenth day of a lunar month] is the best day [for the performance of retreats] 凡齋以控帶江山，依據林薄為勝地，月望為佳日。²⁷⁸ While such an injunction may seem, in a sense, generic, for many Buddhist monasteries are sited on particularly imposing or remote mountains, this injunction occurs with surprising frequency in Water-Land manuals (and, to my knowledge, rarely in other liturgical texts). Indeed, the *Chongguang shuilu wuzhe fashi dazhai yiwen* includes a whole homily on the importance of such “excellent sites” in its “Admonitions” fascicle, as well as justifications for insisting on mountains as the proper place to hold the ritual.²⁷⁹ It tells us that “only by relying on famed mountains and old temples can one hold retreats. Without such a place, how can one [properly] adorn [the ritual space]? 依名山，依古寺，方可設齋。無其處，何以莊嚴.” According to this text, all of the sites in which the Buddha once preached are considered “excellent sites,” and famed mountains, ancient temples and the locations of treasure towers are all places where past buddhas carried out their practices, or where buddhas, bodhisattvas, and arhats live unseen by the karmically obstructed eyes of humans. The manual also includes a tale about the official Ren Xi 任襲 of Kuizhou 夔州 (modern-day Fengjie County 奉節縣, Chongqing Municipality) who, in 1118, decided to hold a Water-Land Retreat at Wolong shan 臥龍山 for his father, who had died at an unknown time and place. The officiating monk summoned the local Earth God to announce the performance of the ritual to the gods of the Netherworld in hopes that the father might be summoned to attend. Suddenly, a black ether appeared in the northeast, and shortly thereafter, Ren Xi’s servant-girl was possessed by the spirit of his father. Ren Xi’s father then recounted that he had been murdered in early 1106 by a business associate. Ren Xi asked whether his father had received

²⁷⁸ SSTL, 118c.

²⁷⁹ CGSL, “Jiaojie,” 24a-25b.

the various mortuary offerings he had made. The father had not; he had only received notice of the performance of the Water-Land Retreat at Wolong shan, for only the Earth God there had successfully transmitted the announcement of the ritual to the Netherworld. The father then asked that whenever Ren Xi performed retreats in the future, he be sure to make use of the Earth God and Buddhist spells to summon him. Consequently, the manual concludes that

as for the places where this [ritual] is performed, one cannot not rely on famed mountains and excellent places. Thus, we know of Emperor Wu of Liang's holding it at Jinshan si [literally, Gold *Mountain* Monastery], and Chan Master Ying's holding it at Beishan si [literally, North *Mountain* Monastery]. Ancient people paid attention [to such things]; it was not accidental.

此修設之處，不可不依名山勝地也。是知梁武帝修之於金山寺，英禪師修之於北山寺。古人措意，非偶然也。

The Yunnanese manual, following Yang E's example, thus clearly indicates the importance of mountains—those liminal topographic features that bring Earth closest to Heaven—for the performance of this ritual that is, ultimately, predicated on temporarily bringing the mundane and supramundane into direct, even physical contact. Further, it shows how important the bureaucracy of the supramundane world is to ensuring the success of human performances of the ritual; indeed, as a number of supernatural tales compiled by Hong Mai and others confirm, without proper respect for the bureaucratic procedures of the supramundane realm—bureaucratic procedures that seem, in many ways, to have little to do with Buddhism—, human ritualists will ultimately fail in performing the ritual, no matter how lofty or sincere their intentions.²⁸⁰

After proclaiming the necessity of making use of mountains and other auspicious, liminal spaces, Yang E then goes on to discuss the ritual personnel necessary for the performance of the rite. The Tripiṭaka Master 三藏, he says, is responsible for purifying the water placed before the

²⁸⁰ On the bureaucratic nature of the Water-Land Retreat, see Part 3 of this dissertation.

Buddha, for reciting mantras day and night, and for visualizing the transformation of water into ambrosia 甘露 so that it might be used as dharma-food. The Ritual Master 法師 recites texts and oversees ritual affairs. The Cantor 歌讚 is in charge of chanting hymns. And the Sponsors 檀越 hold incense censers while facing the deities and exercising the power of their vows. The Sponsor must be diligent and sincere; the Ritual Master must be lofty in his conduct; the Tripiṭaka Master must persist in his right-mindfulness; and the Cantor must properly adorn his right sincerity in order for the ritual to be successful. The ritual personnel are, in essence, little different from those specified several centuries later by Zhipan and Zhuhong. While many more ritualists might be employed, these four figures seem to represent the core officiants necessary for the simplest performance of the ritual.

The Life of a Lay Ritualist

Several points regarding Yang E's personal biography are perhaps worth pointing out before we continue on to examine other forms of Song Water-Land practice; for not only may they explain why Yang E insists on reducing the liturgy to its essence, but also they may point to unique aspects of Song Buddhist ritual practice more generally. Perhaps most importantly, Yang E was a layman, not a monk. Although details about his biography are scarce, it is clear that he passed the *jinsshi* examination in 1034²⁸¹ and later served as a military judge 軍事判官.²⁸² It is, I would argue, highly unusual that a layman should compose a ritual manual—in particular, a manual for a ritual as complex, and at times esoteric, as the Water-Land Retreat. Even more unusually, this layman's manual ultimately became a source-text for later monks who updated or

²⁸¹ See Hou Chong, "Yang E 'Shuilu yi' kao," 3, and Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086), *Xu shihua* 續詩話, 2b, in SKQS.

²⁸² See Hou Chong, "Yang E 'Shuilu yi' kao," 3, and Shen Gou 沈遘 (1025-1067), *Xi xi ji* 西溪集, fasc. 10, 8b, in SKQS.

further expanded the ritual. Yet the Water-Land Retreat seems to have largely been left to the hands of the laity; Emperor Wu of Liang, the mythical progenitor of the rite, was, after all, a layman, and most Song-dynasty accounts of the ritual are to be found in texts penned by laypeople, not monastics. I wonder, however, whether we might not see Yang E's authoring of this liturgical text as indicative of a broader trend during the Song toward the vernacularization of ritual practice. It seems, in fact, that the Song saw the definite rise of the laity's taking control of their practices of worship and perhaps relying less on monastic officiants than they might have in the past.²⁸³

Second, Yang E was a native of Zizhou 梓州 in eastern Sichuan 東川²⁸⁴ (northeast of Chengdu) and served in Luzhou 瀘州, also in Sichuan (southwest of Chongqing, and relatively close to Dazu County).²⁸⁵ Sichuan was a place of great importance to late-Tang through Song Buddhism in general, and to the Water-Land Retreat in particular. As was noted in Chapter 1.2, Sichuan became a hotbed of ritual innovation in the period, perhaps thanks to the influx of high-ranking Buddhist clerics who accompanied Tang Emperor Xizong when he twice fled to

²⁸³ Daniel B. Stevenson, "Protocols of Power: Tz'u-yün Tsun-shih (964-1032) and Tien-t'ai Lay Buddhist Ritual," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 340-408, brilliantly discusses the ways in which the great Song-dynasty Tiantai ritualist Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032) sought to provide new models for lay ritual practice based on the reforms he made to monastic practices. Daniel A. Getz, Jr., "T'ien-t'ai Pure Land Societies and the Creation of the Pure Land Patriarchate," in *ibid.*, 477-523, provides a related account of monastic influence on the foundation of lay Pure Land societies 淨土社. I wonder if the Water-Land Retreat might not provide an important counter-example to the dissemination of ritual practice from monastics to laypeople so well described by these two scholars.

²⁸⁴ Sometimes written as Tongchuan 潼川—that is, the region in eastern Sichuan near modern-day Chongqing, of which Dazu is a part. See, for example, Jujian 居簡 (1164-1246), "Chengtian Shuilu tang ji 承天水陸堂記," ca. 1221, in QSW, fasc. 6803, vol. 298, 308.

²⁸⁵ Connections between Luzhou and Dazu through the figure of the Southern Song scholar-official, and pious Buddhist layman, Feng Ji 馮楫 (1074-1153) are discussed in some detail in Thomas Suchan, "The Eternally Flourishing Stronghold: An Iconographic Study of the Buddhist Sculpture of the Fowan and Related Sites at Beishan, Dazu, ca. 892-1155," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2003, 23-24, 86-87, 114-123.

Chengdu to escape the rebels threatening his capital in Chang'an in the late ninth century. Importantly, it was in Sichuan that the first systematized account of the Ten Kings of Purgatory was penned,²⁸⁶ and it was Sichuan that, throughout the Song, was generally seen as the home of the orthodox practice of the Water-Land Retreat even as it came to be practiced throughout the empire. As Zongjian's *Shimen zhengtong* indicates, however, by the thirteenth century, there were already two established, widely recognized, competing traditions of performing the ritual, with the Sichuanese tradition claiming its authenticity (and hence, orthodoxy), and the central and southern Chinese tradition proclaiming that it paid greater respect to the ritual by radically expanding it.²⁸⁷

The Orthodoxy of the Sichuanese Tradition

In fact, in the 1090s, if not before,²⁸⁸ another famous Sichuanese lay Buddhist disciple, the renowned scholar-official Su Shi, was already proclaiming the authenticity, and hence

²⁸⁶ See Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994).

²⁸⁷ *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, compiled by Zongjian 宗鑑 (act. mid thirteenth century), 1232, fasc. 4, in X75, no. 1513, 304a.

²⁸⁸ See Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), "Shuilu faxiang zan 水陸法像贊," in SSTL, 115a-116a. These encomia, which I discuss in detail in the following pages, are generally thought to have been written for a Water-Land Retreat performed in honor of his wife, Wang Runzhi 王閏之 (1048-1093), after her death on the first day of the eighth month of the eighth year of the Yuanyou 元祐 era (1093), as suggested in FZTJ, 418a. For such an interpretation, see Beata Grant, *Mount Lu Revisited* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 145-149. For Wang Runzhi's death date, see Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), "Shu Jinguangming jing hou 書金光明經後," in QSW, fasc. 1934, vol. 89, 235-236. Su's preface to the encomia mentions that he commissioned Master Shanben 善本 of the Fayun Monastery 法雲寺 (in the capital of Bianliang 汴梁, modern-day Kaifeng 開封) to perform the ritual for which he crafted these images, and that he sponsored the rite together with the "great patron Duke Zhang 大壇越張侯," that is, Zhang Lei 張耒 (1054-1114). It seems unlikely to me that Su would sponsor a mortuary ritual for his wife together with anyone else; further, given that Wang Runzhi's corpse was laid in the Huiji Cloister to the west of the capital 城西惠濟院 (see Su Shi, "Shu Jinguangming jing hou," 235), I doubt that he would have sponsored a Water-Land Retreat for her in a separate location. Nor have I been able to find any evidence outside of the FZTJ, a notoriously unreliable (albeit convenient) source, suggesting that these encomia were indeed written for his wife's mortuary retreat. On the other hand, idem, "Shijiawen fo song 釋迦文佛頌," ca. 1093, in QSW, fasc. 1986, vol. 91, 305, discusses the performance of a Water-Land Retreat for Wang Runzhi on the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1093—that is, the hundredth-day anniversary of her death; Su also commissioned the famed painter Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106) to paint a set of images of Śākyamuni Buddha and his ten disciples on this occasion. Su is known to

superiority, of the ritual practice popular in Sichuan. Su once sponsored a Water-Land Retreat and wrote a set of sixteen poetic eulogies in praise of the classes of beings summoned during the ritual—the very same classes summoned in Yang E’s version of the liturgy. Intriguingly, in his preface to the encomia, Su asserts that “only my people of Shu still preserve the old methods 唯我蜀人頗存古法.”²⁸⁹ Indeed, he says that

Emperor Wu of Liang was the first to sponsor the Water-Land Retreat and to use [these] sixteen names to exhaust the triciliocosm. Its material needs were narrow, but its bestowal was broad; its affairs were abbreviated, but its principles were complete. Later generations did not understand, and subsequently expanded it. If one makes one or two count for everything, even if one reaches the ten millions, it will not be complete.

昔梁武皇帝始作水陸道場，以一十六名盡三千界，用狹而施博，事約而理詳，後生莫知，隨世增廣，若使一二而悉數，雖至千萬而靡周。²⁹⁰

In other words, for Su Shi, it is the very simplicity—or simple efficiency—of the ritual in its orthodox form that makes it so appealing. The unnecessary expansion and complication of it by people outside of Sichuan he seems to find deplorable. One wonders if a parallel might not be established between Su Shi’s discourse on ritual and his better-known discourses on painting, which invariably privileged the simple, even amateurish sketching of the scholar-official over the highly wrought works of professional painters. Interestingly, Su’s encomia were soon appended

have sponsored multiple Water-Land Retreats throughout his lifetime, as can be deduced from texts such as idem, “Qianzhou fachuang xia Shuilu daochang jian guhun zhipo shu 虔州法幢下水陸道場薦孤魂滯魄疏,” in QSW, fasc. 2002, vol. 92, 220-221, and idem, “Zang kugu shu 葬枯骨疏,” in *ibid.*, 221, which is specified as a Water-Land statement in SSTL, 116a. Consequently, it is unclear to me whether Su did, indeed, write these sixteen encomia specifically for his wife in the 1090s.

²⁸⁹ SSTL, 115a. Su continues on to say that in sponsoring the retreat, he sought to “eternally make an unhindered bestowal, and to abide by [or guard] this indelible [or unprinted] liturgy 永為無礙之施，同守不刊之儀.” Grant, 146, reads the term “*bukan* 不刊” as suggesting that the liturgy had been taught orally and had not been printed; however, the term can also refer to something that is impossible to extinguish, thus rendering her translation questionable. Unfortunately, I have not been able to trace the history of the printing of manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. In general, period discussions of the Water-Land Retreat merely say that the ritual, but not necessarily the ritual manuals, “circulated widely.”

²⁹⁰ SSTL, 115a. Part of this text is translated in Grant, 145; several of Su Shi’s eulogies are translated and contextualized in *ibid.*, 145-149.

to Yang E's liturgy, expanding the liturgy in a way that might have put Su ill at ease. Writing around 1221, the Southern Song monk Jujian 居簡 (1164-1246) notes in his "Chengtian Shuilu tang ji 承天水陸堂記" ("Record for the Water-Land Hall at Chengtian [Monastery]") which was written for a major Chan monastery (now known as Chongyuan Monastery 重元寺) in Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu Province, that "the Song judge Yang E of Tongchuan expanded [the manual composed by Emperor Wu], and the encomia for the eight positions of the Upper and Lower [Halls] by [Su] Dongpo were appended after Yang's [manual] 宋推官潼川楊諤則增廣之，東坡上下八位讚則附楊後."²⁹¹ Moreover, several decades later, Zhipan was to include Su among his list of patriarchs of the Water-Land Retreat to be venerated during the ritual's performance.²⁹²

Interestingly, despite the various claims about the differences between methods of performing the ritual in Sichuan and in Jiangnan—claims²⁹³ which are repeated and developed in the preface to the second widely circulated, systematized liturgy for the ritual, which was compiled by the monk Zongze in 1096 from various versions of Yang E's text²⁹⁴—, Yang E's account of the origins of the Water-Land Retreat actually was inscribed on a stele at Jin shan, the

²⁹¹ Jujian 居簡 (1164-1246), "Chengtian Shuilu tang ji 承天水陸堂記," ca. 1221, in QSW, fasc. 6803, vol. 298, 308.

²⁹² FJSF, 792a.

²⁹³ See SSTL, 115a. Zongze's claims also form the basis of Zongjian's account in the *Shimen zhengtong* discussed in Chapter 1.2.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 115a, notes that "in the summer of the third year of the Shaosheng era, Zongze then collected the editions of various parties, edited them, and codified them into four fascicles, to roughly form a complete text 宗蹟向於紹聖三年夏，因摭諸家所集刪，補詳定勒為四卷，粗為完文." Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*," 35, reads this as implying that Zongze collected various "local redactions [of Yang E's *Shuilu yiwen*]." Although this is a possible interpretation, given that the preceding sentence discusses the popularity of Yang E's orthodox three-fascicle text in Sichuan and the popularity of much expanded rituals elsewhere in the empire, the sentence remains somewhat ambiguous. It is also possible that Zongze compiled various versions of the ritual and codified them into something new; after all, his text was a full fascicle longer than Yang E's original, and, as we will see, divides the pantheon quite differently.

mythical home of the Water-Land Retreat, in 1071 and was reinscribed in 1125.²⁹⁵ In other words, his version of the ritual seems to have exercised more than merely local influence, possessing instead a definite degree of national popularity. Local traditions quickly transgressed geographical boundaries,²⁹⁶ while peripatetic practitioners—like Su Shi, continually moving about from post to post and from place of exile to place of exile—remained convinced of the superiority of their native traditions, despite their exposure to other methods of practice. It is possible that it was, precisely, the increasing circulation of officials and merchants throughout the empire in the Song that ensured that local traditions which relentlessly proclaimed their authenticity came to be seen as such across China.

Zongze and the Efflorescence of the Water-Land Retreat

At the end of the eleventh century, the text composed by the northern Chinese Chan and Huayan practitioner Zongze revised Yang E's liturgy to create a manual that was to become especially popular in northern China.²⁹⁷ In it, he expanded the pantheon of spirits fêted, contravening his predecessors' injunction to keep the ritual as simple as possible. Zongze divided the spirits into a tri-partite scheme that foreshadowed the pantheon and methods recorded in the “northern” *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* discussed in Chapter 1.1; indeed, it seems likely that Zongze's manual served as the model text for the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu*

²⁹⁵ SSTL, 114b.

²⁹⁶ For more on the rise of local religious practices to empire-wide popularity, see Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*, and the critique of Hansen's position in von Glahn, esp. 134.

²⁹⁷ For an introduction to Zongze's life and career, see Hou Chong 侯冲, “Song seng Cijue Zongze xin kao 宋僧慈覺宗蹟新考,” in *Chaoyue qianzai de zhuisi: Jinian Huiyuan dashi danchen 1670 zhounian* 超越千載的追思：紀念慧遠大師誕辰 1670 周年, edited by Shi Daan 釋大安 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2008); and his student Yang Jun's 陽琚 “Song seng Cijue Zongze xin yan 宋僧慈覺宗蹟新研,” unpublished M.A. thesis, Shanghai Normal University, 2012.

yiwen, and importantly, his manual seems to have circulated widely in northern China during the Jurchen Jin and Yuan dynasties.²⁹⁸ Specifically, Zongze begins his text by noting:

In what is called the Water-Land Assembly, above, one presents offerings to the various buddhas of the *dharmadhātu*, to the various bodhisattvas, to the *pratyekabuddhas* and the *śrāvakas*, to the *vidyārājas* and the eight kinds of [dharma-protecting] beings, and to the brahman immortals; next, offerings are presented to Brahma, Indra, and the twenty-eight *devas*, and all of the venerated spirits of the planets and stars; below, one makes offerings to the Five Marchmounts and the deities of the rivers and seas, the dragon spirits of the great land, the peoples of the past, the myriad *asuras*, the officials of the Netherworld and their attendants, the myriad beings of Hell, shady spirits and stagnant ghosts, the myriad ghosts and spirits lacking both master and support, and the animals of the *dharmadhātu*.

詳夫水陸會者，上則供養法界諸佛，諸位菩薩，緣覺聲聞，明王八部，婆羅門仙，次則供養梵王，帝釋二十八天，盡空宿曜一切尊神，下則供養五嶽河海，大地龍神，往古人倫，阿修羅眾，冥官眷屬，地獄眾生，幽魂滯魄，無主無依諸鬼神眾，法界旁生。²⁹⁹

While still maintaining a basic continuity with the pantheon venerated by Yang E and Su Shi, Zongze has expanded it exponentially to include a number of more vernacular and Daoist deities that we have not seen explicitly invoked since the Daoist-inflected ninth-century accounts of Lord Xu's performance of the ritual and of Zhang Nanben's paintings. Thus, by the end of the eleventh century, Zongze's systematized version of the ritual was looking backward to embrace the openness that characterized it at its very origin. It was rapidly expanding, and increasing numbers of non-Buddhist spirits were being subsumed within it. In a sense, Zongze exploded the limits of Yang E's liturgy to accept more fully the expansive and expanding character that seems to typify the ritual in its later incarnations. Importantly, this version of the ritual would become the basis of Song and later practice at Jin shan, the site of the ritual's mythical origin. As Zongjian noted in the thirteenth century, the version of the ritual that made use of one-hundred-twenty painted scrolls—which, most likely, was the version penned by Zongze—was

²⁹⁸ See Hou Chong, "Hongji zhi fanyi."

²⁹⁹ SSTL, 114b.

particularly popular from the Jiangnan region northward, while Yang E's and Su Shi's more ancient, more orthodox sixteen-seat variant found particular popularity in Sichuan, and, as I will discuss below, throughout southern China more generally.

Zhipan and Water-Land Practice near Ningbo

Finally, although the absolute Song-ness of Zhipan and Zhuhong's *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* cannot be stated with complete certainty, a few comments about the liturgy, the circumstances of its composition, and its place within the broader landscape of Song-dynasty practices of the Water-Land Retreat, are perhaps necessary. From the above outlines, it is clear that Zhipan's liturgy falls more closely into line with Yang E's rather than with Zongze's, maintaining Yang E's bipartite altar structure while expanding the number of spirits fêted.

Despite his allegiance to Yang E's tradition, Zhipan includes both Yang E and Zongze in his list of ten patriarchs of the Water-Land Retreat.³⁰⁰ He places Yang E at the end of this list, presumably because he is the figure of lowest social status in the group of ten, which includes personages ranging from Ānanda, the cousin and disciple of the buddha Śākyamuni, to monks such as Baozhi and Zongze, to widely venerated secular figures such as Emperor Wu of Liang and Su Shi. As noted briefly in the description of this liturgy in Chapter 1.1, Zhipan also makes his version of the Water-Land Retreat more explicitly Tiantai in orientation, incorporating a number of Tiantai doctrinal concepts, and citing extensively from writings by Zhiyi and Zhili.

In his *Fozu tongji*, Zhipan discusses his reasons for composing this new manual in some detail. The thirty-third fascicle of the text—which consists of descriptions of a variety of popular Buddhist practices taken from canonical texts, ranging from the crafting of images of the Buddha to the performance of rituals like the Water-Land Retreat, paired with useful commentaries on

³⁰⁰ FJSF, 791c-792a.

the practices by Zhipan himself, which reveal his distinctively Song viewpoint—includes a summary of Yang E’s account of the origins of the Water-Land Retreat, followed by Zhipan’s comments on the ritual.³⁰¹ Zhipan notes that “in Shu there is the ritual text of Judge Yang, which widely circulates throughout the world. 蜀中有楊推官儀文，盛行于世。”³⁰² His commentary, however, deals specifically with the circumstances surrounding his composition of a new liturgy. He tells us of the prominent Southern Song statesman Shi Hao 史浩 (1106-1194), a native of Ningbo who, as a devout Buddhist, actively patronized a number of prominent Tiantai abbots and monasteries in the region surrounding his natal place. Zhipan tells us that Shi Hao had once visited Jin shan and envied the grandeur of the Water-Land Retreats performed there; consequently, in 1173,³⁰³ he donated 100 *mu* (approximately 6.5 hectares) of land to build a “Water-Land Altar of the Four Seasons 四時水陸道場” on Mt. Yuebo 月波山 “in order to repay the kindness of Heaven and Earth, the emperors, and his ancestors 以為報天地君親之舉.”³⁰⁴ Later commentators responded quite positively to Shi Hao’s vision, and one—Baotan 寶曇 (1129-1197), a prominent monk active in the Ningbo region throughout much of Shi Hao’s life—even mentioned in a statement written in support of fundraising campaign for Yuebo Monastery that “in the depths of night, one would doubt that it was not a small Jin shan 夜深疑小金山.”³⁰⁵ Further, Shi Hao personally composed statements and texts to be used in performing

³⁰¹ FZTJ, fasc. 33, 321b-c.

³⁰² Ibid., 321c.

³⁰³ FZTJ, fasc. 47, 428c.

³⁰⁴ FZTJ, fasc. 33, 321c.

³⁰⁵ Baotan 寶曇 (1129-1197), “Yuebo huagong Shuilu shu 月波化供水陸疏,” in QSW, fasc. 5389, vol. 241, 220. On the relationship between Shi Hao and Baotan, see Huang Chi-chiang 黃啟江, *Yiwei Chan yu jianghu shi*:

the ritual and had them carved in stone on the walls of the hall 且親製疏辭刻石殿壁; he also compiled a ritual text of four fascicles,³⁰⁶ which he printed at the temple 撰集儀文刊板於寺.³⁰⁷ Elsewhere in the *Fozu tongji*, Zhipan also mentions that Shi Hao placed images of the “Ten Realms” in the hall that he built 乃於月波山創殿設十界像, an ambiguous statement that suggests either that Shi Hao used only ten icons in his performance of the ritual or, as I think is more likely, that he included an unspecified number of images of all beings of the Ten Realms of the cosmos.³⁰⁸ His liturgy—in particular, his regulations for the various ritual implements to be used and praises to be sung—came to be used by temples both urban and rural 俎豆之器，繁約折衷。讚唄之音，抑揚有節。鄉城諸刹，莫不視此為法.³⁰⁹ Shi Hao’s activities attracted the attention of Emperor Xiaozong 孝宗 (1127-1194; r. 1162-1189), who bestowed a title plaque on the temple, declaring it to be the “Unobstructed Altar of [All Beings of] Water and Land 水陸無礙道場.” This liturgy was also practiced by as many as three thousand monastics and laypeople at the nearby Zunjiao Cloister 尊教院. However, because Shi Hao’s liturgy was intended solely for use by social elites and lacked the sense of equality among all beings (and social classes) that the Water-Land Retreat was intended to possess,³¹⁰ the members of the congregation at Zunjiao

Nansong wenxueseng yu Chan wenhua de tuibian 一味禪與江湖詩: 南宋文學僧與禪文化的蛻變 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 2010), 117-204, esp. 135-160.

³⁰⁶ FZTJ, fasc. 47, 428c.

³⁰⁷ FZTJ, fasc. 33, 321c.

³⁰⁸ FZTJ, fasc. 47, 428c.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.: “Near Yuebo there is a cloister called Zunjiao. The myriad masters and disciples lead three thousand *śramaṇas* and laypeople, who donate both material goods and land. At first, they followed the way of the universal salvation of the four seasons of Yuebo. Formerly, members of Zunjiao said that the texts of the statements of intentions of the Prince of Yue [Shi Hao] exclusively were to repay the officials of the past and to render service to

Cloister begged Zhipan to compose a new liturgy, which he did in six fascicles 乃力挽志磐續成新儀六卷.³¹¹ To expand the reach of the ritual, he had woodblocks carved to print the manual 推廣齋法之盛，而刻其板.³¹² Further, he rectified the names of the various positions of spirits summoned during the ritual, and ultimately used twenty-six hanging scrolls in performances of it 復依準名位，繪像幀者二十六軸.³¹³ Zhipan, who worked under Zongjing 宗淨, the abbot of Mt. Yuebo, prayed that his manual would be seen as the proper method for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat by all temples of the ten directions and that this would subsequently allow the flourishing of the way of universal salvation 當願十方伽藍，視此為法，大興普渡之道.³¹⁴

A number of texts related to Yuebo si written by Shi Hao, including letters of invitation to abbots, poems, and announcements or statements regarding specific ritual performances have survived in his collected writings, which has allowed Japanese scholars including Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔 and Satō Seijun 佐藤成順 to carefully map Shi Hao's connections to various abbots and temples throughout Ningbo over the course of the past fifteen years; too, they have been able to reconstruct Zhipan's position eighty years later within this complex matrix of monasteries and

the deeds of emperors and parents. As good as they may be, with regard to the disparity between rich and poor, no intent to perform an equal offering could be seen.

去月波里所有梵苑曰尊教。師徒濟濟率沙門族姓三千人，施財置田，一遵月波四時普度之法。先是尊教同人有謂，越王疏旨之辭，專為平昔仕官報，效君親之舉。美則美矣，而於貴賤貧富未見平等修供之意。”

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

lineages descended from the abbots of Shi Hao's era.³¹⁵ While the precise details of these historical reconstructions are of little relevance to the issues at hand in my account, certain information and images provided in Shi Hao's writings give us a broader picture of the place of the Water-Land Retreat within elite Southern Song society and are thus worth citing. Zhipan's characterization of Shi Hao's elitism seems to be right on the mark, as Shi's writings deal almost exclusively with the performance of rituals in governmental contexts and by high-ranking scholar-officials. Many of these texts—in particular, his “Shidaifu shishi wen 士大夫施食文” (“Text on Food Bestowal by Scholar-Officials”) included in Zongxiao's 宗曉 (1151-1214) *Shishi tonglan* 施食通覽 (*Survey of Rites of Food Bestowal*)³¹⁶—focus especially on the relationship among the quality of governmental rule, the abundance of harvests and the frequency of natural disasters, and the use of ritual to rectify the relationship between rulers and Heaven. Indeed, in an announcement written for the performance of a Water-Land Retreat to supplicate rain in Fuzhou 福州, Fujian Province, in 1174, he tells us directly that “from the loss of the properness of governance and punishment comes flood and drought's mutual interference 由政刑之失當，致水旱之相乘,” and he reflects at length on how the failures of rulers affect

³¹⁵ See especially Ide Seinosuke 井手誠之輔, “Nihon no Sō Gen butsuga 日本の宋元仏画,” *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 no. 418 (March 2001): 60-70, and idem, “Daitoku-ji denrai *Gohyaku rakan zu* shiron 大徳寺伝来五百羅漢図試論,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 256-257. See also Satō Seijun 佐藤成順, “Nansō no saishō Shi Kō to bukkō: Tendai sō gaigo to kudokuji zōei ni tsuite 南宋の宰相史浩と仏教：天台僧外護と功德寺造営について,” *Sankō bunka kenkyūjo nenpō* 三康文化研究所年報 36 (2005): 1-36; idem, “*Busso tōki senjū no basho*: Geppasan Jihi fusai-ji to Fukusensan Enjuō kōfuku-ji ni tsuite 『仏祖統紀』撰述の場所：月波山慈悲普濟寺と福泉山延寿王広福寺について,” *Indo bunka to Bukkyō shisō no kichō to tenkai* インド文化と仏教思想の基調と展開 (Tokyo: Sankibō busshorin, 2003), vol. 2, 3-28. On Shi Hao and his family more generally, see also Richard L. Davis, *Court and Family in Sung China, 960-1279: Bureaucratic Success and Kinship Fortunes for the Shih of Ming-chou* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986).

³¹⁶ SSTL, 113b.

both common people and Heaven itself.³¹⁷ Believing that he had caused the obstructions that led to this disturbance in the balance between rulers and Heaven, he decided to “perform an Offering of the Netherworld and This World to illuminate the sincerity of [his] repentance 用啟冥陽之供，以昭懺悔之誠.”³¹⁸ He thus “held an Assembly of the Great Retreat of [All Beings] of Water and Land again in the Fuzhou Offering Hall to make universal offerings 重於福州設廳差設水陸大齋之會，普申供養.”³¹⁹ The location that Shi Hao chose for his performance of the ritual is particularly interesting: rather than performing it in a monastery, he seems to have chosen to hold the ritual performance in an offering hall in the offices of the Fuzhou prefectural government. Such a practice seems not to have been uncommon for Shi: on another occasion, he “welcomed saintly icons of the Thousand Saintly Heaven-Crowned Bodhisattvas into the prefectural offices to pray for ambrosial rain 迎請千聖天冠菩薩聖象入府，祈求甘雨.”³²⁰ This ritual of universal salvation could, then, be instrumentalized to fulfill the needs of the state.

While the remainder of Shi Hao’s Water-Land announcement does not describe exactly how he performed the ritual, it does give some sense of the grandeur of the performance. He tells us that

among the myriad buddhas and bodhisattvas, none will not chant and announce, as flower curtains fall all around. Not only do we offer fine dishes and precious fruits, but also we array pagoda-eave decorations and gold. We will perform the texts with great depth, transforming the fragrant incense limitlessly. Looking up, we see that only the dharma rules, and all bestow their presence. Let us drive away the drought-causing demons to

³¹⁷ Shi Hao 史浩 (1106-1194), “Fuzhou qiyu she Shuilu shu 福州祈雨設水陸疏,” 1174, in QSW, fasc. 4420, vol. 200, 146.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 147.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Shi Hao 史浩 (1106-1194), “Fuzhou xieyu qiqing shu yi 福州謝雨祈晴疏一,” ca. 1172-1174, in QSW, fasc. 4420, vol. 200, 147.

return to the void, and spur the haughty dragon to fulfill his duties. Let these linked fields of white soil be transformed into ten thousand *qing* of clear watery ripples. May the furrows be well broken, flourishing and happy! ... Thus, the populace's full bellies will all be [due to] the great kindness of the arrayed saints.

諸佛菩薩莫不梵唄宣揚，花幔散墜。既設嘉饌珍果，又陳風馬金錢。演章句之甚深，變馨香之無盡。仰惟法馭，咸賜光臨。驅旱魃以歸空，策驕龍而效職。使此連畦之白壤，化為萬頃之清漪。澤澤其耕，欣欣有喜。。。。則斯民之一飽，皆列聖之洪私。³²¹

Shi's text thus gives us a remarkable vision of the cosmic resonances of the Water-Land Retreat—a far cry from its primary soteriological functions. Here, the common Buddhist notions of “repentance” and “universal salvation” have been twisted in a somewhat unexpected way. Shi repents his past misdeeds in order save the commoners under his protection. Calling down the myriad buddhas and bodhisattvas, he seeks to provide offerings so magnificent that the celestial bureaucracy will forget his past misdeeds; in doing so, he prays that they will instead help him to exorcize drought-causing demons and to mobilize rain-bringing dragons to end the drought that has afflicted his prefecture. State interests, state religion, and Buddhist ritual technology have been married seamlessly. And as we will see throughout this chapter, the Water-Land Retreat was frequently used in such cosmic ways in the Song, realigning humans, Earth, and Heaven.

Intriguingly, too, a number of Shi Hao's texts suggest that rituals and monasteries might themselves be considered eternal offerings to the buddhas. In an announcement regarding his inviting Lecture Master Youlun 有倫講師 to take over as abbot of the Water-Land Cloister at Yuebo Monastery, he concludes with the notion that “the assembly of this numinous mountain [will remain] majestic, never dispersing, eternally praying for the longevity of the emperor 靈山

³²¹ Ibid.

會儼然未散，永祝帝齡”³²²; meanwhile, in an announcement regarding fundraising for the monastery on Mt. Yuebo, he writes that “together we will form an eternally dwelling, never-moving foundation, perpetually praying for the boundless numbers of the supremely venerated 共成常住不拔之基，永祝至尊無疆之算.”³²³ Eternality—and specifically, the eternal efficacy of prayers guaranteed through non-human means of action—seems to have greatly preoccupied Shi Hao. In this, there is a resonance with the Shibi si stele, which, as we saw in the Introduction to this dissertation, may well have eternally extended the efficacy of the ephemeral performance of that Water-Land Retreat in 1210 by lithically recording the liturgy employed in the ritual.

Patrons, Places, and Functions: The Water-Land Retreat in Song Society

While the fragments of the manuals of Yang E and Zongze, as well as Zhipan’s more complete, though retrospectively edited manual, give us only a rather limited sense of the social place of the Water-Land Retreat during the Song, the accounts of Shi Hao’s performances of the liturgy have begun to bring the ritual alive. A more detailed investigation, however, is in order, as over the course of the dynasty, the liturgy came to be performed by members of all levels of society, in spaces both Buddhist and non-, ultimately taking on a variety of functions whose range would never be suspected given the content of the materials we have examined up to this point. As we have seen, all of the Song liturgical sources—which are inherently prescriptive rather than descriptive in nature—seem to be in agreement in constructing the Water-Land Retreat as a ritual of universal celebration and salvation to be performed by Buddhist monks for

³²² Shi Hao 史浩 (1106-1194), “Qing Lun jiangshi zhu Yuebo Shuilu yuan shu 請倫講師住月波水陸院疏,” in QSW, fasc. 4420, vol. 200, 152. The text does not mention the full name of Lecture Master Lun. However, FZTJ, fasc. 21, 243b, gives a brief biography of the Dharma Master Youlun 法師有倫, a native of Ningbo, who studied at Shousheng si 壽聖寺 in Xiaoxi 小溪, a monastery with which Shi Hao had extensive contact. Given this, I assume the “Lecture Master Lun” mentioned in Shi Hao’s text to be Youlun.

³²³ Idem., “Yuebo shan qiuhua shu 月波山求化疏,” in QSW, fasc. 4420, vol. 200, 156.

the benefit of lay people. Fundamentally, it is presented as a ritual of the universal offering and bestowal of sustenance both alimentary and spiritual, which will thereby ensure that all beings in the cosmos will be given access to a higher path of rebirth. Zongze himself, however, gave it a slightly more worldly inflection, opening it to more socially grounded functions. Notably, he mentions that if a person wishes to

preserve and celebrate peace, but does not perform the Water-Land [Retreat], then people will consider him not virtuous; if one seeks to serve his superiors and elders but does not perform the Water-Land [Retreat], then people will consider him unfilial; if in aiding the needy and the young, one does not perform the Water-Land [Retreat], then people will consider him uncompassionate.

或保慶平安，而不設水陸，則人以為不善。追資尊長，而不設水陸，則人以為不孝。濟拔卑幼，而不設水陸，則人以為不慈。³²⁴

In other words, it is a ritual that can bring about definite benefits in the human world, but it is also one that is circumscribed within the grander Confucian logic of filiality that so broadly influenced middle- and late-period Chinese Buddhism. Importantly, too, Zongze also gives us a sense of the various scales at which the Water-Land Retreat might be performed, specifically mentioning that a wealthy patron might sponsor a performance individually, while the less wealthy might collectively donate funds to perform it 由是富者獨力營辦，貧者共財修設。³²⁵ Thus, the liturgy might also be instrumentalized to reaffirm community bonds, something that we saw in the Introduction in the text of the stele from Shibi Monastery in Dazu. Scale and function become intimately linked.

If we turn our attention away from these prescriptive liturgical sources and examine instead more descriptive, secular sources, our understanding of the place of the Water-Land

³²⁴ Ibid., 114c. Also translated in Stevenson, “Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*,” 30.

³²⁵ Ibid, 114c.

Retreat within the landscape of Song ritual practices becomes far richer. Many of the myriad secular accounts that survive simply confirm the basic contours of the ritual examined above; others, however, suggest that it was being used in ways not necessarily foreseen or prescribed by Yang E and Zongze (but perhaps related to some of the functions outlined in the Dunhuang manuscripts that we examined in Chapter 1.2). In the following pages, I survey some of these secular sources, which range from short “statements” written for particular performances of the ritual to ghost stories, from records commemorating the construction of temples or Water-Land Halls to placards publically posted during ritual performances. For the sake of convenience, I organize this discussion according to the social rank of the sponsoring parties. We begin with imperial performances, whose functions were relatively circumscribed, before continuing on to consider performances of the ritual outside of the court. I will suggest that these various accounts make clear that it was the Water-Land Retreat’s inherent malleability and modularity that allowed it to be repurposed to so many different ends; moreover, I will also argue that certain resonances between the modular syntax of the ritual and the modular structure of statements composed for individual performances of it may also have contributed to its rapid rise in popularity. However, we also will see that this inherent malleability opened the Water-Land Retreat to criticism from proponents of ritual propriety who transformed it into an object of distinct opprobrium.

Imperial Performances

Secular sources suggest that performing the Water-Land Retreat was a matter of imperial concern from the very earliest years of the Song dynasty.³²⁶ An imperial edict from the *dingyou*

³²⁶ Some references to Song imperial performances of the Water-Land Retreat are compiled in Wang Chuan 汪娟, “Songdai fojiao chanyi de fazhan beijing 宋代佛教懺儀的發展背景,” in *Fojiao wenxian yu wenxue* 佛教文獻與文學 (Taipei: Foguang wenhua shiye youxian gongsi, 2011). A number of primary references to Song performances of the Water-Land Retreat both imperial and non- are also included in Liu Hsiang-kwang 劉祥光, “Song dai de

丁酉 (fifteenth) day of the fourth month of the sixth year of the Kaibao 開寶 era (973) notes that the first emperor of the Northern Song, Taizu 太祖 (927-976; r. 960-976), had

heard in regard to *abhiṣeka* altars and the Water-Land Retreat Assembly, that on the same night, men and women are brought together in temples to establish [these altars]. This [practice] is extremely degenerate and does not benefit the upholding of moral conduct. We should order the Office of Merit and Virtue and the Minister of Sacrifices to inform the two capitals and the various circuits and prefectures that these [practices] are both to be forbidden.

如聞灌頂道場、水陸齋會，並夜集士女，就寺開設，深為褻黷。無益脩持。宜令功德司及尚書祠部，告諭兩京諸道州府，並禁止之。³²⁷

Quite simply, the Water-Land Retreat, which often was begun at night, was seen as immoral, a claim that would be repeated at the end of the Northern Song by Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135; r. 1100-1126), though for different reasons. While Taizu was generally an enthusiastic supporter of Buddhism—for example, sponsoring the first complete woodblock-printed edition of the Buddhist canon—, his concern with Confucian propriety seems to have trumped his devotion to the Buddhist church in this particular instance. As we shall see, the propriety and orthodoxy of performances of the Water-Land Retreat were, indeed, to become issues of utmost importance at court later in the dynasty.

It might be imagined that the issuing of such an edict at the beginning of the dynasty would bode poorly for the status and use of the Water-Land Retreat at an imperial level in the following centuries. Nevertheless, succeeding emperors and their families used the Water-Land

jiamao zhi gui 宋代的假冒之鬼,” unpublished conference paper, “Guoji Song shi yantaohui ji Zhongguo Song shi yanjiuhui di shier jie nianhui 國際宋史研討會暨中國宋史研究會第十二屆年會,” July 2008.

³²⁷ “Jin yuding daochang shuilu zhahui ye ji shin ü zhao 禁灌頂道場水陸齋會夜集士女詔,” *Song da zhaoling ji* 宋大詔令集, fasc. 223, 861, in HJDZ. The date given in *Song da zhaoling* is actually the eighth year of the Kaibao era (975). This seems to be mistaken, as there was no *dingyou* day in the fourth month of eighth year of the Kaibao era; there was such a day—the thirteenth—in the fourth month of the *sixth* year, however. Indeed, XZZTJCB, fasc. 14, 299, lists this as the day of the issuing of this decree.

Retreat in various ways, as can be ascertained both through official histories and through texts preserved in various officials' collections of prose. In truth, the ritual seems to have been used regularly by emperors for both public and private purposes. As early as 1015, a Water-Land Retreat was imperially ordered to be performed for workers who had died in the construction of the new prefectural seat in Dizhou 棣州 (modern Binzhou 滨州, Shandong Province); while the spirits of the dead were placated with the ritual performance, the living were rewarded with cash and banquets.³²⁸ Historically verifiable imperial sponsorship of the Water-Land Retreat actually predates the Song by several decades: in the seventh year of the Tianfu 天福 era of the Later Jin dynasty (942), the Emperor Gaozu 高祖 (892-942; r. 936-942) sent Yan Tao 延韜, a Guard of the Palace Personnel Office 內班衛, to Zhenzhou 鎮州 (modern-day Zhengding 正定, Hebei Province) to establish a Water-Land altar, presumably for the benefit of the war dead.³²⁹ Throughout the Song, the ritual continued to be used to placate the ghosts of the dead, especially soldiers killed during the many wars that plagued the border regions of the empire. In 1048, for example, a Water-Land Retreat was held in the Pu'an Cloister 普安院 of the capital in honor of soldiers killed at Enzhou 恩州 (modern-day Qinghe County 清河縣, Hebei Province) in the war with the Khitan Liao dynasty.³³⁰ Similar such mortuary Water-Land Retreats were held for soldiers killed during the 1070s and 1080s in wars with the Tangut Xi Xia (1038-1227)³³¹ and

³²⁸ *Song huiyao ji gao* 宋會要輯稿, *Fang yu* 方域, fasc. 8, 14, in HJDZ. This is the earliest reference to an imperially sponsored performance of the ritual in the Song that I have found.

³²⁹ *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜, fasc. 52, 583b, in HJDZ. This is the only reference to an imperially sponsored performance of the ritual during the Five Dynasties that I have found.

³³⁰ XZZTJCB, fasc. 162, 3905.

³³¹ See, for example, XZZTJCB, fasc. 389, 9449.

during the uprising of the Zhuang 壯 people in the area of modern-day Guangxi Province.³³²

Imperially sponsored Water-Land Retreats only proliferated after 1127 when the war with the Jurchen Jin so profoundly reshaped the contours of the Song empire. Indeed, in the aftermath of this war, emperors ordered regular performances of the ritual for dead soldiers, and it seems to have been in this era that the court began to sponsor performances of the ritual at Jin shan in Zhenjiang; the earliest mention that I have seen to imperial performances of rituals for war dead in Zhenjiang dates to 1134.³³³

At the same time, private Water-Land Retreats were routinely performed in the imperial palace for the commemoration of the deaths of members of the imperial family during the reigns of many emperors. A series of Water-Land Retreats were held in the Funing dian 福寧殿 of the imperial palace 內中—that is, palace precinct in which the emperor lived and slept—in commemoration of the death of Emperor Yingzong 英宗 (1032-1067; r. 1062-1067) in 1067. A retreat was held for Empress Cao 曹 (1016-1079) in 1079 at her tomb at Yongzhao ling 永昭陵. At least three Water-Land Retreats were held for Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (1048-1085; r. 1067-1085) in the Funing dian in 1085, and four were held for Empress Dowager Gao 高 in her residence, the Chongqing gong 崇慶宮, and in the Fusheng chanyuan 福聖禪院 in 1093. Meanwhile during the Southern Song, three ritual performances were held in 1131 and 1132 for Empress Meng 孟 (1073-1131), while many more Water-Land Retreats were held for Emperor Xiaozong in 1194 and for Empress Xie 謝 (1132-1203) in 1203. The court even ordered the

³³² See *ibid.*, fasc. 273, 6689; and *ibid.*, fasc. 292, 7129.

³³³ See Wang Chuan, “Songdai fojiao chanyi de fazhan beijing,” 15-16. The references cited show that the Water-Land Retreat was performed in Zhenjiang Prefecture 鎮江府, for which Jin shan served as a major center of Buddhist practice, but they do not explicitly mention Jin shan.

performance of the Water-Land Retreat to commemorate the deaths of the heads of neighboring states (though these performances were not held within the imperial palace). For example, in 1083, upon the death of the Goryeo king Munjong 文宗 (1019-1083; r. 1046-1083), Emperor Shenzong ordered a single-night Water-Land Retreat to be performed in a temple in Mingzhou 明州 (modern-day Ningbo) by thirty-seven monks as the culmination of a month of mortuary commemorations.³³⁴

None of these private imperial performances is recorded in the official histories of the dynasty, nor do edicts mandating their performance survive. Instead, we are able to know of them through the survival of prefatory texts and other ritual documents preserved in the collected writings of various officials, including Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086), who composed the texts for Emperor Yingzong's mortuary rites; Su Shi, who wrote for Emperor Shenzong; Fan Zuyu 范祖禹 (1041-1098), who wrote for Empress Dowager Gao; Qi Chongli 綦崇禮 (1083-1142) and Wang Zao 汪藻 (1079-1154), who penned the texts for Empress Meng; and Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137-1213), who wrote for Xiaozong. As this list reveals, the authors of these texts were all among the most prominent scholar-officials of their times, powerful both in political and literary circles. While their texts necessarily conform to the demands of the genres in which they were writing—genres which required the use of concise, parallel prose—the texts tend to give an eloquent statement of the main issues and themes that were of concern to the court when mourning. Su Shi's texts, among the most concise of any written for imperial-level performances, give particularly elegant expression to the period vision of the ritual. For example,

³³⁴ XZZTJCB, fasc. 339, 8163. Fascicle ten of the *Goryeosa* 高麗史 mentions that envoys from Goryeo were dispatched to Song China in 1090 specifically to obtain a copy of a manual from the performance of the Water-Land Retreat.

in a text written for a Water-Land Retreat performed in honor of Emperor Shenzong on the Winter Solstice 冬至 (the fifteenth day of the eleventh month in the lunar calendar), presumably in 1085,³³⁵ the year of Shenzong's death, Su writes:

The saints and spirits ascend and descend, with Indra and Brahma behind and before.
Now experiencing the time of the return, we grandly pray for the fortunes of rebirth.
Respectfully making a pure offering, we look [to those] above to lead the journey of the soul.

伏以聖神陟降，釋梵後先。適更來復之辰，茂薦往生之福。虔修淨供，仰導靈游。³³⁶

With but three pairs of parallel phrases, Su gives us the essence of the ritual: the summoning of deities, the offerings proffered, the benefits brought to the souls of the deceased, and the sending of the souls to be reborn. While nothing in the text surprises, its concision and elegance affects.

Qi Chongli and Courtly Filiality

Not surprisingly, filiality seems to have been of primary concern in many court-sponsored performances of the liturgy. These concerns are given especially clear and eloquent expression in the series of texts that Qi Chongli composed for the performances of the Water-Land Retreat held in honor of Empress Meng in 1132 by a group of twenty-one monks. It is clear that at least one—and most likely, all—of these performances took place over the course of only a single day and night.³³⁷ Like Su Shi, Qi Chongli was particularly adept at succinctly summarizing the essence of the ritual, speaking, for example, beautifully of

³³⁵ The year of the composition of the text is not noted.

³³⁶ Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), “Dongzhi Funing dian zuo Shuilu daochang zijian Shenzong huangdi zhaiwen 冬至福寧殿作水陸道場資薦神宗皇帝齋文,” in QSW, fasc. 1999, vol. 92, 153.

³³⁷ See Qi Chongli 綦崇禮 (1083-1142), “Yu qian Hanshi jie yu Zhaoci xianlie huanghou jian qian jian Shuilu daochang zhaiwen 御前寒食節於昭慈獻烈皇后几筵前建水陸道場齋文,” in QSW, fasc. 3660, vol. 168, 68, which mentions that “twenty-one monks were ordered to perform a single-day and -night Water-Land Retreat before the [spirit] seat of Zhaoci xianlie huanghou [Empress Meng] 使僧二十一人就昭慈獻烈皇后几筵前作水路道場一晝夜者.”

all the masses of Heaven above and of the human world, and the myriad creatures that live in water and walk on land, be they ghosts or gods, mundane or saintly, universally approaching the dharma assembly, together gaining marvelous merit. Relying on the Supreme Vehicle, they universally benefit from the fruits of fortune; [re]born in the Land of Supreme Bliss, they all look up toward the Face of Compassion.

合天上人間之眾，徧水居陸走之殊。若鬼若神，或凡或聖，普臨法會，同攝勝功。憑最上乘，以普資于福果。生極樂國，其皆仰于慈顏。³³⁸

Again, the essential elements of the ritual are all present, its universally salvific function emphasized above all else.

Several of the other texts that Qi composed for the empress's mortuary rites, however, give a more Confucian inflection to the proceedings. Filiality—expressed both through praise of the metaphorical imperial mother and through the rhetoric of the pressing need to repay the myriad blessings that that parent had bestowed on the children of her state—comes to the fore. It is Buddhism, however—and not classical Confucian burial rites—to which the author, and the state, turns to venerate the empress.³³⁹ Indeed, while Chinese Buddhists had long been engaged in reconciling indigenous concepts of filiality with the tenets of this foreign religion that fundamentally rejected the biological family, it was in the ninth and tenth centuries that texts on Buddhist forms of filial recompense found particular favor among worshippers. This was, in other words, the very same period during which the Water-Land Retreat, later explicitly conceptualized by Zongze as a major liturgy for the repayment of parental kindness, was taking

³³⁸ Idem, “Zhaoci xianlie huanghou jiyuan qian Zhongyuan jie daoqiang zhaiwen 昭慈獻烈皇后几筵前中元節道場齋文,” in QSW, fasc. 3660, vol. 168, 68.

³³⁹ For a recent study of burial rites of all major religious traditions in the Song, including a review of earlier scholarship, see Choi, “Contesting *Imagaries* in Death Rituals during the Northern Song Dynasty.”

shape.³⁴⁰ Taking his cue from such tendencies, Qi Chongli tenderly writes of the deceased empress:

Great virtue being impossible to forget, I feel as though your compassionate visage is still present; my filial heart wishing to repay [your kindness], only the Teaching of Images [Buddhism] can be relied upon.

伏以盛德難忘，想慈顏之如在；孝心欲報，惟象教可憑。³⁴¹

Similarly, he tells us that “only in relying on awakened power can I make merit [for the deceased] with my filial sincerity 唯憑覺力，用薦孝誠.”³⁴² He speaks, too, of “looking [to those] above to benefit [your] netherworldly fortunes, while I bow down to console my filial heart 仰資冥福，俯慰孝心.”³⁴³ At least rhetorically, at the court of Emperor Gaozong, only the Water-Land Retreat, Buddhism’s grandest liturgy of universal offering, was sufficient to repay the Confucian debts of a child to his parents, or of a child of the state to his metaphorical imperial mother.

³⁴⁰ See, for example, the discussion in Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 196-213. This tendency toward using Buddhist ritual to repay filial debts seems to have only gained momentum during the Song. The tableaux depicting the *Sutra on the Skillful Means of the Buddha’s Repayment of Kindness* 大方便佛報恩經 and the *Sutra on the Kindness of Parents* 父母恩重經 at Baoding shan in Dazu County bear particularly vivid witness to this trend. On these tableaux, see Karil Kucera, “Cliff Notes: Text and Image at Baodingshan,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 2002, 46-95. Monks themselves seem to have viewed a close connection between these sutras on filiality and the Water-Land Retreat. For example, Zhou Bida’s 周必大 (1126-1204) account of the Chan Master Fozhao 佛照禪師 records that the Master saw the recompense sutras as the highest expression of filiality and consequently placed seats for his ancestors on the east side of the Water-Land Hall in his monastery. See Zhou Bida 周必大 (1126-1204), “Yuanjian ta ming 圓鑑塔銘,” ca. 1203, in QSW, fasc. 5195, vol. 233, 175-177.

³⁴¹ Qi Chongli 綦崇禮 (1083-1142), “Yu qian Hanshi jie yu Zhaoqi xianlie huanghou jiyuan qian jian Shuilu daochang zhaiwen 御前寒食節於昭慈獻烈皇后几筵前建水陸道場齋文,” in QSW, fasc. 3660, vol. 168, 68.

³⁴² Idem, “Yu qian wei Zhaoqi xianlie huanghou jiyuan qian jian Shuilu daochang zhaiwen 御前為昭慈獻烈皇后几筵前建水陸道場齋文,” in QSW, fasc. 3660, vol. 168, 70.

³⁴³ Idem, “Zhaoqi xianlie huanghou jiyuan qian zuo Shuilu daochang zhaiwen 昭慈獻烈皇后几筵前作水陸道場齋文,” in QSW, fasc. 3660, vol. 168, 69.

The Modularity of Textual Production in the Writings of Fan Zuyu

The Water-Land Retreat was, of course, only one of many options available to imperial mourners; the format of the many similar such texts composed for these various funerary rites of differing sectarian leanings varies little, and while images and metaphors may change slightly depending on whether the text was written for a Buddhist ceremony such as the Water-Land Retreat or a Daoist ritual such as the Retreat of the Yellow Register or the Retreat of the Nine Shades 九幽齋, the works have a decidedly similar feel and textual effect. Composed for the Buddhist and Daoist mortuary rituals performed in honor of Empress Dowager Gao, who died on the third day of the ninth month of the eighth year of the Yuanyou era 元祐 (1093), the short homilies penned by Fan Zuyu provide a useful case study through which to view the modularity of the language used in these imperial-level ritual texts, as well as the modularity of ritual practices themselves within the context of the imperial court. The texts are all remarkably concise, their sectarian orientations determinable only by close attention to the insertion of one or two key phrases.

The series begins with a “retreat text 齋文” to be recited during a Water-Land Retreat performed on the eighth day of the ninth month in the Chongqing gong, the area of the imperial palace in which the Empress Dowager had resided and ultimately died. For this first seventh-day commemoration of the Empress Dowager’s death,³⁴⁴ Fan writes:

Merit covers the human world, ascending to perfection without returning; the dharma fills worlds [as numerous as] the sands [of the Ganges], responding to offerings without limit. Let us sincerely perform mortuary mourning and grandly open an assembly of universal compassion. Hoping, we rely on the superior constituent; looking upward, we venerate the numinous journey.

³⁴⁴ In fact, the rite was performed only five days after she had died. This might suggest a systematization of funerary rites based on calendrical concerns above all else.

伏以功被寰區，登真不返；法周沙界，應供無邊。式陳哀薦之誠，大啟等慈之會。
冀憑妙界，仰奉靈游。³⁴⁵

The text gives us a somewhat generic view of the Empress Dowager's postmortem fate. It is clear that her soul will journey heavenward, while her loyal followers piously perform mortuary rites to guarantee her postmortem fortune, a scenario that has formed the heart of all Chinese rites of ancestor worship from ancient times to the present. Only a select number of phrases reveal the specifically Buddhist orientation of the rite performed—"worlds [as numerous as] the sands [of the Ganges] 沙界," for example, and "superior constituent 妙界"; in contrast, the phrase "ascending to perfection 登真" in the second half of the first couplet might well make us think that we are dealing with something more Daoist in nature. Ultimately, it is only the phrase "assembly of universal compassion 等慈之會" that suggests, though not conclusively, that it is the Water-Land Retreat that is the subject of the text. Of all of the texts that Fan wrote to commemorate the Empress Dowager's death, this is perhaps the least inspired; however, that very lack of inspiration speaks to the heart of the issue at hand: the modular, even perfunctory nature of imperial mortuary ritual.

Seven days later, on the fifteenth day of the month, the court sponsored a Daoist Offering of the Nine Shades as the second seventh-day mortuary commemoration for the Empress Dowager. Before the empress's death, at least one other Daoist ritual, a Retreat of the Golden Register 金籙齋, had been performed in an attempt to cure the Empress Dowager of illness, to eliminate misfortunes, and to supplicate good fortune 服藥消災祈福; Fan had written for this

³⁴⁵ Fan Zuyu 范祖禹 (1041-1098), "Chongqing gong kaiqi Daxing taihuang taihou chuqi Shuilu daochang zhaiwen 崇慶宮開啟大行太皇太后初七水陸道場齋文," 1093, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 235-236.

performance, as well.³⁴⁶ Despite the failure of this pre-mortem ritual to cure the empress, the court again made use of Daoist ritualists to pray for post-mortem blessings. In his text for this second of the Empress Dowager's post-mortem rituals, Fan's tone and vocabulary differ little from that employed in his first text. He laments:

Your compassionate face is forever distant, driven by whirlwinds, not staying behind. Striving to repay [your kindness], we mourn endlessly. We adorn the palace, and respectfully construct a pure place [for ritual performance]. We hope to rely on the souls of the perfected saints, ascending to cross the path of the immortal journey. We pray for a return clear and bright, deeply forgiving with absolute sincerity.

伏以慈顏永隔，飈馭不留。欲報之勤，追攀罔極。載嚴禁宇，祇建清場。覬憑真聖之靈，上濟仙遊之路。願回昭鑑，深諒精誠。³⁴⁷

Compassion, perhaps more typically seen as Buddhist virtue, is now associated with the deceased, whose post-mortem path is Daoicized through references to flying in the skies above, soaring with immortals and the perfected saints. With but a few minor changes, however, this text could just as easily be recited in a Buddhist ritual context. The language of these texts, just like the ritual practices themselves, becomes decidedly modular. Both Buddhist and Daoist rituals could be performed for the same generic purpose of generating post-mortem merit for the deceased, the liturgies of each religion alternately performed within the same cycle of mortuary commemorations, just as the language and images employed in the homilies could be interchanged with little influence on the overall textual effect.

The absolute interchangeability of these texts and ritual practices becomes even clearer in Fan's remaining texts for Empress Dowager Gao, all of which were composed for performances

³⁴⁶ Idem, "Taihuang taihou fuyao xiaozai qifu Jinlu daochang qingci 太皇太后服藥消災祈福金籙道場青詞" and "Taihuang taihou fuyao xiaozai qifu Jinlu daochang zhubiao 太皇太后服藥消災祈福金籙道場朱表," 1093, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 234.

³⁴⁷ Idem, "Daxing taihuang taihou erqi yu Chongqing gong she Jiuyou jiao qingci 大行太皇太后二七於崇慶宮設九幽醮青詞," 1093, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 236.

of the Water-Land Retreat. The line between ostensibly competing religious traditions becomes completely blurred as Fan mixes terms and images from both traditions within individual texts composed for the Water-Land Retreat. On the twenty-second day of the ninth month, for example, he writes:

The perfected rides and does not stay, your compassionate visage forever far away. Looking up [in reverence] to rely on the power of enlightenment, we pray and worship for the journey of the soul. Respectfully cleansing palace paths, we grandly lay out the dharma assembly. Numerous gathering limitless fortune, we use it to benefit the unknowable spirit.

伏以真馭不留，慈顏永遠。仰憑覺力，追奉靈游。祇祓禁塗，大陳法會。庶集無邊之福，用資不測之神。³⁴⁸

Again, the immortal-like soul soars in the heavens above, though now it relies explicitly on the power of the Buddha to do so. This theme continued to preoccupy Fan, it seems, and on the first day of the following month, Fan again likened the journey of the soul to that of an immortal, while circumscribing this journey within more explicitly Buddhist terminology and discourse on enlightenment. Thus, he tells us:

[You] immortally journey eternally distantly, as the sun quickly passes. Treading on frost and dew intensifies our mourning, as we think of your voice and visage as though they were [still] present. Looking up to rely upon marvelous enlightenment, we respectfully pray for your perfected soul. Worshipfully approaching the Buddhist temple, we grandly lay out a dharma assembly. We numerous generate supreme fruits, and use them to aid your distant ascent.

伏以仙游永遠，日御遄流。履霜露以增哀，想音容之如在。仰憑妙覺，祇薦真靈。恭即仁祠，大陳法會。庶緣勝果，用助遐升。³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Idem, “Chongqing gong kaiqi Daxing taihuang taihou sanqi Shuilu daochoang zhaiwen 崇慶宮開啟大行太皇太后三七水陸道場齋文,” 1093, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 236.

³⁴⁹ Idem, “Shi yue shuo zijian Daxing taihuang taihou yu Fusheng chanyuan zuo Shuilu daochoang zhaiwen 十月朔資薦大行太皇太后於福聖禪院作水陸道場齋文,” 1093, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 236.

Finally, on the twenty-first day of the tenth month, a Water-Land Retreat was performed as the final seventh-day mortuary commemoration for Empress Gao in the Chongqing gong. Buddhist and Daoist phrasing becomes even more completely intertwined, the modularity of the textual expression fully apparent. Fan writes:

[You] have bidden eternal farewell to the great earth; the sun has quickly passed. Praying in the deep kindness of mourning, we perform the marvelous teachings of universal compassion. Palace paths are adorned and opened, and the dharma assembly is nondiscriminatory. Relying on the supreme causes of the ten powers [of the Buddha], you ascend to cross the immortal path of the Nine Heavens. Respectfully stated.

伏以坤儀永謝，日御遄流。追罔極之深恩，修等慈之妙教。禁塗載闢，法會無遮。庶憑十力之勝因，上濟九天之仙路。謹言。³⁵⁰

The text touches on all of the main themes that Fan had elaborated in previous texts. Beginning with the vast distance of the deceased from the human world, he remarks on the passage of time, directly copying a phrase that he had used in a previous text (“the sun has quickly passed 日御遄流”). He then shifts his attention to the courtly performance of mourning, doubly evoking the performance of the Water-Land Retreat within the space of the palace. And he ends by remarking that the quasi-Daoist immortal ascent of the Empress Dowager’s soul to the Nine Heavens—the phrasing of which he repeats almost verbatim in a text two months later³⁵¹—will

³⁵⁰ Idem, “Chongqing gong kaiqi zijian Daxing taihuang taihou daochang jinqi zhaiwen 崇慶宮開啟資薦大行太皇太后道場盡七齋文,” 1093, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 237.

³⁵¹ See the last couplet of idem, “Chongqing gong wei Daxing taihuang taihou zhengdan she Shuilu daochang zhaiwen 崇慶宮為大行太皇太后正旦設水陸道場齋文,” 1094, in QSW, fasc. 2168, vol. 99, 240, which was written for a Water-Land Retreat performed for the Empress Dowager on the first day of the new year at the Chongqing gong:

Driven by whirlwinds to dwell in Heaven, [you] see your burial clothes forever distant. The handle of the Dipper records the year, startling us with the renewal of the calendar. Treading on moist dew with our broken hearts, we rely on the True Vehicle to pray for your fortune. Worshipfully adorning a pure offering, we purify with utmost sincerity. Looking up, we pray for the compassion of marvelous awakening, so that you may ascend to cross the path of the immortal journey. Respectfully stated.

伏以飈馭賓天，望珠襦而永遠。星杓紀歲，驚玉曆之更新。履濡露以摧心，依真乘而迫福。崇嚴清供，蠲潔至誠。仰祈妙覺之慈，升濟仙游之路。謹言。

be achieved through reliance on the powers of the Buddha. Syncretic content, generic formatting, and elegant expression come together in a surprisingly beautiful synthesis.

Of course, the modularity of these texts written for imperial performances of the Water-Land Retreat and Daoist offerings such as the Retreat of the Nine Shades and the Retreat of the Yellow Register comes as little surprise; a major duty of scholar-officials at court was, precisely, to compose such texts for the vast numbers of rituals of various religious traditions—Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, state, and vernacular—that were constantly performed by the emperor and his associates. Nevertheless, the precise way in which these texts penned by Fan Zuyu were composed seems a fitting metaphor for the Water-Land Retreat and its Daoist counterparts. The generic template, and function, of both the texts and the rituals varies little; each shares a similar opening, middle, and end, and each ultimately serves to generate merit for the deceased. Phrases, like ritual actions, can be interchanged at will so long as the overall syntax of the genre or of the liturgy is respected. Modularity, perhaps a direct function of a bureaucratic need for efficiency, thus becomes a defining trait of both ritual and official writing.

Ritual Propriety and the Rectification of Names: The Case of Emperor Huizong

While the Song court maintained a generally positive relationship to the Water-Land Retreat throughout the three centuries of its rule, that relationship became particularly fraught during the reign of Emperor Huizong, the zealous proponent of Daoism who famously converted all Buddhist monasteries to Daoist abbeys and who forced Buddhist monks and nuns to become, or at least change their names to that of, quasi-Daoist “scholars of virtue 德士.”³⁵² Within the context of his broader campaign to promote Daoism—which reached its height between 1116 and 1119 during the courtly tenure of Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (1075-1119), the ostensibly Heaven-

³⁵² For a still-useful and -insightful introduction to Huizong’s promotion of Daoism, see Michel Strickmann, “The Longest Taoist Scripture,” *History of Religions* 17, no. 3/4 (February-May 1978): 331-354.

sent proponent of the Divine Empyrean 神霄, a new region of the Daoist cosmos whose teachings proclaimed themselves to supersede all that had come before—, the Water-Land Retreat seems to have particularly attracted the emperor's ire; for this was a ritual whose syncretic tendencies might easily lead to the profanation of the Daoist deities whom Huizong was so eager to serve. As mentioned briefly in the Introduction to this dissertation, Huizong, following the example set by his father, Emperor Shenzong, issued multiple decrees forbidding the placement of the Three Purities 三清, the highest deities in the Daoist celestial bureaucracy, within the pantheons summoned during performances of the Water-Land Retreat. In fact, this issue seems to have preoccupied Huizong throughout much of his reign, even before he fell under the sway of Lin and declared himself to be the “Great Lord of Life Everlasting, Perfect Sovereign of Jade Purity in Exalted Shenziao 高上神霄玉清真王長生大帝”—that is, the son of the Jade Emperor and the third master of the Shenziao lineage. A series of decrees and letters composed by the emperor in regard to this issue survive, allowing privileged insight into the mind of one very important critic of this society-wide ritual practice, and allowing more general insight into a major theme of both Buddhist and Daoist ritual reform during the Song—namely, an obsession with both orthopraxy and orthodoxy.

The template for Huizong's actions was set in the fifth year of the Yuanfeng 元豐 era (1082) by his father, Emperor Shenzong, a ruler who frequently ordered performances of the Water-Land Retreat to appease the restless souls of soldiers and commoners killed in war, by bandits, and by natural disasters, as well as to commemorate the death of his father, Emperor Yingzong. Despite his willingness to instrumentalize the Water-Land Retreat to imperial ends, Shenzong seems to have been concerned about certain aspects of performances of the ritual. Thus, in 1082 he decreed that

to place the seats of the Three Purities and of the Emperor on High in array with the ghosts and spirits of the Netherworld in the Water-Land Altar of the Buddhists is to profane the venerable place of the lofty perfected. Officials should rigorously forbid this.

又詔釋氏水陸道場，設三清上帝等位，與幽冥鬼神為列，褻瀆高真仰所在，官司嚴加禁止。³⁵³

The issue, then, was one that touched on the pantheons of both Daoism and state religion.

Buddhists were likening the highest figures in both religions to nothing more than wandering ghosts. Such actions could not be permitted to continue. Instead, the precise definitions of different religious traditions must be reinforced; names needed to be rectified.

Yet such actions did, of course, continue—indeed, it was in the intervening years that Zongze composed his manual for the performance of the ritual, which very clearly subordinated Daoist and state deities to the buddhas above—, and in the fifth year of Huizong’s reign, the young emperor found himself consternated about the very same practices. Thus, on the fifth day of the tenth month of the fifth year of the Chongning 崇寧 era (1106), he issued a series of decrees treating these practices in their various manifestations. The first decree touched upon matters of state religion. Huizong proclaimed:

Those below Heaven venerate and serve the Emperor on High and follow his orders. How dare we not respect him? Yet followers of the Buddha, when performing Buddhist rituals, erroneously array the Emperor of Heaven after the ranks of ghosts and spirits. This is extremely profane; nothing is worse. This could defeat the heart of paying tribute to the Emperor on High! We should order officials to inspect and get rid [of such behavior], in order to uphold my majestic, venerable intention.

詔曰。有天下者尊事上帝，勅命惟幾，敢有弗虔？而釋氏之徒修營佛事，妄以天帝次於鬼神之列。瀆神逾分，莫此之甚，其能克享上帝之心乎！可令有司檢會削除，以稱朕嚴恭寅畏之意。³⁵⁴

³⁵³ *Hunyuan shengji* 混元聖紀 (CT 770), compiled by Xie Shouhao 謝守灝 (1134-1212), fasc. 9, in ZHDZ, vol. 46, 119c.

³⁵⁴ Compare FZTJ, 419a; Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135), “Shitu ying foshi yi Tiandi wei guishen ling you si chu zhao 釋徒營佛事以天帝為鬼神令有司除詔,” in QSW, fasc. 3563, vol. 164, 65; and *Hunyuan shengji*, fasc. 9, in ZHDZ, vol. 46, 120b.

Huizong thus sought to defend the highest deity of the state pantheon, a deity who also figured prominently in the Daoist pantheon, against the misdeeds of profane Buddhists. More importantly, he phrased his decree such that this act of defense is portrayed as a matter of intensely personal concern to the emperor. To violate this decree would, then, be a personal affront to the emperor himself.

The second of his series of decrees continued on to address similar issues within the context of the practice of the Water-Land Retreat. Invoking the memory of his father's actions as a precedent for his current proclamation, he decreed:

Placing the seats of the Three Purities, the Jade Emperor, and the Emperor on High within the Water-Land Altar—is this not to array the noble perfected of the Three Realms together with the ghosts and spirits of the Netherworld? In the past, during the Yuanfeng era of Emperor Shenzong, it was once forbidden to do this. We should inspect and enforce [this law].

又准敕水陸道場之內，設三清，玉皇，上帝等位，其可以三境高真與幽冥鬼神同列乎？昔神考元豐中，曾降詔止絕，可檢舉施行。³⁵⁵

Huizong seems particularly disturbed by the syncretic tendencies of the Water-Land Retreat. Mixing the deities of different religions clearly will not do. However, his ultimate concern is with the proper veneration of Daoist deities and deities of the state pantheon. The Water-Land Retreat, in a sense, is simply the most egregious example of Buddhist profanation of these deities. And while he does not directly state it, Huizong seems aware that the Water-Land Retreat's seeming syncretism is ultimately disingenuous, as it is a ritual that embraces the spirits of other religions only so that they may be transformed into followers of the Buddha. Indeed, Buddhist deities are always placed first.

³⁵⁵ *Hunyuan shengji*, fasc. 9, in ZHDZ, vol. 46, 120b.

This final point lies at the heart of the third decree that Huizong issued on this occasion.

He proclaimed:

For some time, Buddhist temples have often installed icons of the [founders of the] Three Teachings, giving them the title of “cloister” or the name of “hall”; and they place the Buddha in the center, Lord Lao at left, and Confucius at right. This is not the intention behind the court’s praying to the deities of Heaven or promoting Confucianism. We should welcome [images of] Lord Lao and Daoist icons and return them to Daoist abbeys, and we should move [images of] Confucius to academies everywhere; to rectify names, we must divide the images of different teachings.

又准敕，舊來僧居多設三教像，為院額及堂殿名，且以釋氏居中，老君居左，孔子居右。非所以稱朝廷奉天神興儒教之意。可迎老君及道教功德並歸道觀，遷宣聖赴隨處學舍，以正名分以別教像。³⁵⁶

It seems to have been clear to Huizong that even when ostensibly venerating the revered figures of other religions—figures who ought to be treated equally—, Buddhists subordinate them to their own deities. This cannot stand. In fact, while Huizong was an undeniably biased observer of Buddhist practice, he seems not to have exaggerated the phenomena about which he lamented. Buddhist worshippers had, indeed, been installing icons of the founders of the Three Teachings within their monasteries at least since the late Tang dynasty.³⁵⁷ Ultimately, however, as Michel Strickmann has noted, Huizong is most concerned with the rectification of names, with ensuring that signifiers—terms such as “Buddhism,” “Daoism,” and “state religion”—signify their proper signifieds, and only their proper signifieds.³⁵⁸ In comparison to earlier persecutions of Buddhism, which involved the full-scale destruction of temples, texts, and images, this was a surprisingly benign, and rather intellectualized, attempt to control the religion.

³⁵⁶ Compare FZTJ, 419a, and *Hunyuan shengji*, fasc. 9, in ZHDZ, vol. 46, 120b-120c.

³⁵⁷ See, for example, Li Qutai 李去泰, “Sanjiao daochang wen 三教道場文,” 771, in *Bashu daojiao beiwen jicheng* 巴蜀道教碑文集成, edited by Long Xianzhao 龍顯昭 et al. (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1997), 32-34. The practice of installing icons of the founders of the Three Teachings is discussed in some detail in Li Song 李淞, “Kuaguo ‘Hu xi’: Cong Ming Xianzong Yituan heqi tu kan Zhongguo zongjiao yishu de kua wenhua zhenghe 跨過‘虎溪’: 從明憲宗《一團和氣圖》看中國宗教藝術的跨文化整合,” *Yishu shi yanjiu* 藝術史研究 11 (2009): 345-378, esp. 356-360. I thank Lihong Liu for bringing this essay to my attention.

Despite his issuing such decrees to engage secular officials in governing Buddhists' treatment of deities of other religions, it seems that Huizong's edicts fell on deaf years. Only four months after issuing these proclamations, Huizong composed a letter to Liu Hunkang 劉混康 (ca. 1036-1108)—the twenty-fifth patriarch of the Maoshan 茅山 Highest Purity 上清 lineage, who served as one of the emperor's closest spiritual confidantes in the early years of his reign and who had also served in his father's court—in which he lamented the continued Buddhist profanation of his beloved deities. Dated to the ninth day of the second month of the first year of the Daguan 大觀 era (1107), the letter begins, like many other missives penned by Huizong to Liu Hunkang, with lofty praise of its recipient. He writes:

Your manner is noble, clinging to the Way without returning; grasping the origin of the Law, you are what all beings rely upon. Your deeds shine, visible as the sun and stars. You have allowed the teachings of Highest Purity to rise without decline—truly this is great!

卿秉心無妄，執道不回。總持法源，群生所賴。功庸昭著，揭如日星。使上清之教益隆而弗替者，寔有力焉。

Huizong then quickly gets to the heart of his consternation: Buddhists continue to profane Daoist deities in their inappropriately syncretic rites. He tells us:

Recently, Daoism and Buddhism have been confused. Their principles should be differentiated. We should correct this error. [This confusion] even extends to things like the Three Purities' being mixed into the Water-Land [Retreat], and the Primordial Mandate's being contrarily sacrificed to in "Brahman palaces" [i.e., Buddhist temples]; paintings and sculptures are without order, and cannot be put forth. I am now trying to institute proper policy, to explain the teachings, to verify the principles one after another, to probe the origins of habits, and am rebuking officials to worship separately.

比以道、釋混淆，理宜區別，斷自朕心，重訂訛謬。至如三清混居於水陸，元命反祠于梵宮，繪塑無倫，不可概舉。朕方圖敘彝倫，講明教法，稽考後先之理，推原積習之端，申飭有司，分別崇奉。³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Strickmann, "The Longest Taoist Scripture," 346-348.

³⁵⁹ Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135), "Ci Liu Hunkang zhao 賜劉混康詔," in QSW, fasc. 3564, vol. 164, 83-84.

Orthodoxy again is the issue. Deities must be worshipped in their proper places. Syncretism must be avoided at all costs. Importantly for art historians, images, too, are at the heart of the matter. Icons must be kept and worshipped only in spaces devoted to their particular religious tradition.³⁶⁰

These same issues continued to plague Huizong throughout much of the rest of his reign. In 1110, these problems came to preoccupy him under a slightly different guise, which again involved the Water-Land Retreat, and which led to his writing a particularly vivid account of Buddhist mortuary practice. He now found himself writing about Buddhist profanation of the spirits of imperial ancestors. Huizong noted that in the middle of the seventh month, when people of all classes participated in both the Buddhist Ullambana Festival 盂蘭盆節 and the Daoist Zhongyuan Festival 中元節 to bring fortune to the spirits of their ancestors, Buddhist monks attempted to perform rites of salvation—specifically, the Water-Land Retreat—for

³⁶⁰ These concerns, especially as they pertained to images, became even more explicit in an edict of nearly a decade later. Images of Daoist deities were only to be handled by those qualified to do so. Thus, on the fourth day of the third month of the eighth year of the Zhenghe era (1118), Huizong decreed:

We have been told that among the villages under the supervision of Rao Prefecture in Jiangdong Circuit, people believe in shamans; deceived, they give into common practice, often using paper or silk to paint the supreme perfected Three Purities and worshipping them together with heterodox spirits to summon fortune and avert misfortune. Meat and vegetables are mixed together, which is very disrespectful of purity and completely loses the meaning of worshipping and upholding the lofty perfected. From today, we look up to the Judicial Commissioner of this circuit to strictly forbid this in the prefectures and counties under his command; later, whenever there are criminals who violate principle, we will take the painted icons of the Three Purities and return them to [Daoist] palaces and abbeys everywhere. All circuits will follow this.

訪聞江東路饒州管下鄉落之間，信用師巫，蔽溺流俗，多以紙帛畫三清上真與邪神同祀，以祈禳為事，葷茹雜進，殊不嚴潔，甚失崇奉高真之意。自今仰本路提點刑獄行下所屬州縣嚴行禁止，後有犯者，以違制論，仍拘收三清等畫像赴逐處宮觀收掌。諸路準此。³⁶⁰

Icons, then, were only to be worshipped in very specific places by very specific people. Strict separation of religious traditions was to be maintained. Importantly, in this later edict, the emperor precisely names the officials who should be responsible for ensuring that this edict is enforced. The weight of state bureaucracy was finally being brought to bear in enforcing the proper veneration of images. See idem, “Jin Sanqing shangzhen yu xieshen tongshi zhao 禁三清上真與邪神同祀詔,” in QSW, fasc. 3600, vol. 165, 266.

imperial ancestors within an imperial ancestral chapel in the palace compound. In reaction to this, Huizong wrote a somewhat lengthier text than those we have hitherto examined. This essay, from the third day of the eighth month of the fourth year of the Daguan era (1110), gives a brilliant vision of how the Ghost Festival was celebrated in the early twelfth century and shows Huizong's continued irritation over Buddhist profanation of the boundaries among religious traditions. He tells us:

Every year during the Zhongyuan Festival, officials and commoners bend bamboo to make buildings, and with paper they craft dolls like monks dwelling to the side. They call this Ullambana. Buddhists say this is to make merit for the dead, releasing [deceased souls] from Hell to be reborn in Heaven, so that the moral uprightness of the donors will be known to the world.

The two palaces of Jingling are where the souls of our ancestors roam. One should not bow one's head and follow custom, wrongly believing in false golden idols [that is, Buddhism] and emplacing such things. Even if the Buddhist canon records this [custom], what basis is there in the texts of earlier Confucians?

士庶每歲中元節折竹為樓，紙作偶人如僧居其側，號曰孟蘭盆，釋子曰薦嚴亡者，解脫地獄，往生天界，以供者聽行於世俗可矣。景靈兩宮，祖考靈遊所在，不應俯徇流俗，曲信金狄不根，而設此物。縱復釋教藏典具載此等，在先儒典籍有何據執？

Huizong's ire is clear. Both commoners and the elites are following improper procedure for the performance of mortuary commemorations. And things only become worse when the Water-Land Retreat is involved. Thus, Huizong writes:

I see that presently in the mortuary observances for emperors and empresses at the two palaces of Jingling, they use the teachings of the Buddha to perform the Water-Land Retreat Assembly, grandly arraying curtains and canopies, and posting placards that say "Bath Chamber of the Emperor." Monks follow and summon, saying "Do not violate the Buddha's order! Come and descend to the altar!" The souls of ancestors in Heaven immediately follow the summoning of the Buddha's command. Is this not also extremely profane? Furthermore, how can the barbarian Buddha issue an *edict*? Cite passages of whatever regulations there are that can be investigated, place them in a treasured envelope, and present them [to me].

見今景靈兩宮帝后忌辰，用釋教設水陸齋會，盛陳幃幄，揭榜曰帝號浴室，僧從召請，曰「不違佛勅，來降道場」。以祖宗在天之靈，遽從佛勅之呼召，不亦瀆侮之甚乎？況胡佛可以稱呼勅旨乎？有何典常可檢，引條陳寶封進入。³⁶¹

The Water-Land Retreat again finds itself the object of imperial opprobrium. However, the situation is not as simple as that. Rather surprisingly, Huizong acknowledges the power of the Water-Land Retreat to intervene in supramundane affairs; indeed, his concern is based largely on the fact that spirits do, in fact, respond to the summoning of Buddhist ritual officiants. But his concern is also more imperial, almost bureaucratic, in nature: the Buddha, a foreigner, should not be allowed to issue edicts 勅, a type of document that may only be issued by the emperor.

Indeed, Ming- and Qing-dynasty manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat contain models for edicts and pardons 赦 to be issued by the Buddha.³⁶² Further, material evidence for this phenomenon survives from the Song: the stele at Stone Wall Monastery introduced in the Introduction to this dissertation presents itself specifically as an “Edict of the Buddha 佛勅.” Despite the humbleness of the community that carved that stele, the language of the stele has a somewhat imperial flare, perhaps suggesting the ritualist’s greater familiarity with Daoist liturgical practice—within the context of which edicts are not uncommon—than Buddhist.

Two years later, Huizong again found himself on the offense. His earlier decrees seemingly having gone unheeded, he decided to issue yet another proclamation concerning the Water-Land Retreat, the last time he was to do so during his reign. This time, however, he sought to push things even further, not only prohibiting the mixing of Daoist deities into Buddhist altars, but also specifically punishing the monks or nuns who did so, as well as the

³⁶¹ Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135), “Ling yi Liju yi Jingling liang gong kefou yong Shijiao yi zhi yubi 令議禮局議景靈兩宮可否用釋教儀制御筆,” in QSW, fasc. 3575, vol. 164, 259-260.

³⁶² See TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 1. This is discussed extensively in Part 3 of this dissertation.

abbots or abbesses who either oversaw such actions or knowingly ignored them. Thus, on the twenty-fifth day of the first month of the second year of the Zhenghe era (1112), he decreed:

When Buddhists repent and perform the Water-Land Retreat, and when they [build] altars to pray for good fortune and to avert disaster, they always include seats for Daoist deities; in doing so, monks and nuns violate principle. If an abbot knows [that this has occurred] but does not report it, he will be given similar punishment. I write this as an order.

釋教修懺水陸及祈禳道場，輒將道教神位相參者，僧尼以違制論，主首知而不舉，與同罪。著為令。³⁶³

This seems to have been the last of Huizong's attempts to curtail practice of the Water-Land Retreat. In the course of the following decade, he was essentially to abolish the practice of Buddhism in general during a persecutory campaign that ultimately had little effect on the history of Chinese Buddhism yet that elicited much lamentation on the part of Buddhists.³⁶⁴ By the beginning of the Southern Song, Buddhism had again found favor under Emperor Gaozong, who, as we saw above, repeatedly used the Water-Land Retreat to placate the spirits of soldiers killed during the ongoing wars with Jin dynasty. The three-year anniversary of the death of Huizong's empress even was commemorated with a performance of the ritual at Gaozong's court.³⁶⁵ Despite the rancor of this powerful opponent of the ritual, the universal appeal of the Water-Land Retreat could not be stemmed.

Official and Private Performances of the Water-Land Retreat: Mortuary and Beyond

Not surprisingly, the practice of the Water-Land Retreat outside of the imperial court mirrored courtly practice in a number of ways, though the ritual was also repurposed to many

³⁶³ Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135), "Jin shijiao daochang jiang daojiang shenwei xiangcan zhao 禁釋教道場將道教神位相參詔," in QSW, fasc. 3579, vol. 164, 333.

³⁶⁴ See, for example, the comments in FZTJ, fasc. 46, 419a.

³⁶⁵ Liu Yizhi 劉一止 (1078-1161), "Huizong huangdi Xiansu huanghou daxiang jiu Fahui si xiu Shuilu daochang bing zhaiseng shuyu 徽宗皇帝顯肅皇后大祥就法慧寺修水陸道場并齋僧疏語," ca. 1133, in QSW, fasc. 3284, vol. 152, 343.

other, and at times surprising, ends. In the following pages, I will survey some of these different uses, again with an eye toward both the function of the liturgy and the generic conventions employed in the texts that inform us about the ritual. Besides the short prefatory texts of the type that have already been extensively cited, we will look, too, at ghost stories, which provide important insights into specific performances of the ritual while remaining bound by the very specific conventions of their genre.

The majority of such references to non-imperial performances of the Water-Land Retreat deal, not surprisingly, with performances of the ritual for the deceased, either for masses of dead commoners or soldiers under the officials' supervision or, in private contexts, for members of the official's family. Few true surprises are to be found in such texts, though they do, at times, reveal the scholar-officials' unexpected familiarity with the history of the ritual; indeed, Yang E's mytho-history of the ritual—in particular, his associating it with Emperor Wu of Liang—seems to have readily captured the imagination of Buddhist worshippers in the period. However, the ritual's mortuary bent sometimes took on rather surprising inflections. Li Guang 李光 (1078-1159), for example, sponsored a performance of the rite for the salvation of goats that he had been offered as gifts and had subsequently raised as pets.³⁶⁶ Despite its brevity, his text possesses a powerfully affective sincerity. He writes:

In various places, I have been offered goats as gifts. Since I could not bear to kill them, I raised thirteen head for a long time; none failed to mature properly. Now I take fifty strings of cash as a pure offering and personally go to Bao'en Monastery to hold a retreat in offering to the monks, who will recite sutras and perform a Water-Land Retreat to pray that my group of goats will be reborn as humans or *devas*. Previous generations valued life like this; I follow their example and repent.

³⁶⁶ Li Guang 李光 (1078-1159), "Jian yang shuwen 薦羊疏文" in QSW, fasc. 3318, vol. 154, 265.

諸處餽羊，既不忍殺，十有三頭，畜養滋久，遂無脫期。今轉變到淨財五十貫足，躬就報恩禪寺齋供佛僧，看轉經文，仍設水陸，薦拔群羊超生人天者。先輩重物命如此，余亦效尤，為之懺悔。

Even animals, it seems, could benefit from the universally salvific power of the Water-Land Retreat.

In a similar, though slightly nuanced, mortuary vein, the Water-Land Retreat was commonly performed to exorcise and subsequently placate the ghosts of the unburied dead. Zeng Xiaoguang 曾孝廣 (ca. 1045-1105), for example, writes of a five-day, five-night Water-Land Retreat performed for the ghosts of workers who were killed while gathering stones for an imperial mausoleum in 1100.³⁶⁷ He gives the ritual a particularly intriguing title, the “Unobstructed Altar of [All Beings] of this World and the Netherworld, Water and Land, and of the Treasure Talisman of the Golden Register 冥陽水陸金籙寶符無礙道場.” Unfortunately, Zeng does not give any details about how the rite was performed, but the title he gives it suggests the conflation of the Water-Land Retreat—perhaps Zongze’s variant, which frequently was referred to by various titles including the words “[All Beings] of this World and the Netherworld, Water and Land 冥陽水陸”—with a Daoist ritual, the Retreat of the Golden Register 金籙齋. This ritual, which survives in multiple variants, is of a cosmic scope and salvific function similar to the Retreat of the Yellow Register, commonly seen as the Daoist equivalent of the Water-Land Retreat. However, whereas the Retreat of the Yellow Register might be performed by patrons at any level of society, the Retreat of the Golden Register was initially restricted only to imperial patronage.³⁶⁸ The title of this syncretic liturgy would seem to indicate that as early as 1100,

³⁶⁷ Zeng Xiaoguang 曾孝廣 (ca. 1045-1105), “Yongtai ling caishi ji 永泰陵采石記,” 1100, in QSW, fasc. 2569, vol. 119, 249-250.

³⁶⁸ For a discussion of the Retreat of the Golden Register and its possible relevance to the identification of cliff carvings in Dazu and nearby regions of Sichuan, see Kobayashi Masayoshi 小林正美, “Kinrokusai ni motozuku

worshippers were already beginning to completely restructure the ritual, fully embracing its inherent malleability.

Other sources give us a sense of the way in which practitioners of differing traditions of palliation, both medical and exorcistic—including medical doctors, Daoist exorcists, and Buddhist ritualists—were regarded as almost equal players within the marketplace of healing³⁶⁹ broadly conceived. In 1063 the eminent scholar-official Wang Gui 王珪 (1019-1085) penned an epitaph for a young, and seemingly preternaturally gifted, son of a member of the imperial family who was buried in his family mortuary chapel within a “Water-Land Cloister 水陸院.”³⁷⁰ After having fallen unexpectedly ill, his family entreated a variety of palliative specialists to cure him, including medical doctors, Daoist exorcists, and Buddhist monks. Yet his illness ultimately proved incurable. His epitaph seems symptomatic of the rather pragmatic way in which people in the Song approached religion: when a specialist of one particular system of practice (and belief) failed to achieve the goals desired by the patron, the patron simply consulted a specialist of another system of practice and belief. The Water-Land Retreat, like the Retreat of the Yellow Register or the consuming of medicines, was simply once technology among many in the palliative marketplace of the period.

Dōkyō zōzō no keisei to tenkai: Shisen-shō Menyō, Angaku, Daizoku no magai Dōkyō zōzō wo chūshin ni 金錄齋法に基づく道教造像の形成と展開：四川省綿陽・安岳・大足の摩崖道教造像を中心に,” in *Dōkyō no saihō girei no shisōshiteki kenkyū* 道教の齋法儀礼の思想史的研究 (Tokyo: Chisen Shoten, 2006), 223-279.

³⁶⁹ The notion of the “marketplace of medicine” or “healing” was discussed by Pierce Salguero in his paper at the annual Association for Asian Studies conference in March 2013.

³⁷⁰ Wang Gui 王珪 (1019-1085), “Zongshi zuowuwei da jiangjun Junzhou fang yushi ca shangzi mu ji 宗室左武衛大將軍均州防禦使擦殤子墓記,” 1063, in QSW, fasc. 1162, vol. 53, 331-332.

Travelers, Outsiders, and Exorcism in Tales of the Strange

Supernatural tales, such as those compiled by Hong Mai in the *Record of the Listener*, also focus almost exclusively on the simultaneously mortuary and exorcistic aspects of performances of the Water-Land Retreat. One story describes the ghosts of commoners who had attempted to hide in the rear garden of Suzhou's Canglang Pavilion 滄浪亭, the former residence of the mid-Northern Song poet Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽 (1008-1048), during the invasion of the city by the Jurchen Jin, and who had subsequently drowned in the garden's pond.³⁷¹ At night, the myriad ghosts of these monks, Daoists, women, and merchants began to harass the current tenants of the pavilion—in particular, the night watchman, a native of Shaanxi. Confronted by a group of ghosts, the watchman eventually promised to gather their bones, rebury them, and perform a “Buddhist ritual 佛事” to save them. The night after doing so, the guard was again confronted by a ghost who lamented that while his companions had all been properly reburied, his two arms had been left behind in a bamboo grove in the garden. After finding the arms and reburying them, a Water-Land Retreat was performed at Lingyan Monastery 靈巖寺, and the supernatural disturbances plaguing the garden ceased. Thanks to its universally salvific powers, then, the Water-Land Retreat could thus serve as a convenient exorcistic rite.

Despite its brevity, the story speaks to several key generic features that recur in many such tales treating the Water-Land Retreat in the *Record of the Listener*. Perhaps the most important element of such tales is their use of an itinerant, or outsider, figure. It is almost invariably travelers, migrants, or displaced people who are most susceptible to supramundane disturbance. In “Canglang ting,” it is the night watchman, whom we are specifically told is from

³⁷¹ “Canglang ting 滄浪亭,” in YJZ, *yi zhi* 乙志, fasc. 17, vol. 1, 331. A translation is available in Hong Mai, *Selections from the Record of the Listener*, translated by Alister D. Inglis (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2009), 178-181.

Shaanxi—i.e., *not* the local region of Suzhou in which the pavilion is located—, that is the contact-person for the ghosts. The outsider seems to embody the quality of mediation or liminality that is at the heart of any ghost story; he is one who, thanks to his embodiment of the act of mediating between the geographic regions of his former home and his present (if temporary) location, becomes capable of mediating between the realms of the mundane and supramundane. In most Water-Land-related stories in the *Record of the Listener*, it is travelers—especially travelers described in the midst of crossing bridges over bodies of water, those aqueous places in which ghosts were generally thought to dwell—who most commonly serve as the mediational figure upon which the stories are structured; in other cases, the transient is an outside official who has been dispatched to a new post where he comes into conflict with locals ghosts and gods. Using tales from the *Record of the Listener* to explore the performance of exorcistic Daoist rites to cure ailments both physiological and psychological during the Song, Edward Davis has shown that the child-medium—in particular, children who were on the cusp of Song adulthood (which might now be recognized as adolescence)—became the mediational figure *par excellence* in such tales, not only entering into contact with ghosts, but even becoming temporarily possessed by such spirits.³⁷² Women, too, seem to have had a privileged relationship with the supernatural, frequently serving as the mediumistic mouthpieces for ghosts and gods.

Among the most vivid accounts of the Water-Land Retreat compiled in the *Record of the Listener* is a story reported to have taken place in Wu County 吳縣 (essentially, modern-day Suzhou).³⁷³ The niece of a low-ranking official named Chen Zu'an 陳祖安 had fallen ill from some sort of ghostly affliction. A Daoist priest was thus called to exorcize the ghost. He first

³⁷² Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in the Song*.

³⁷³ “Wu Wang su yuan 吳旺訴冤,” in YJZ, vol. 2, 465.

interrogated the spirit, gathering information about it almost as though he were preparing for trial.³⁷⁴ The ghost, named Wu Wang 吳旺, spoke of his years of hateful post-mortem wandering, all due to his body's having been abandoned in a temple and not having been properly buried. When Chen proposed to provide a proper burial for the body, Wu refused, saying that too few of his bones were left for a burial to be effective. Instead, he asked—through the medium of the Daoist practitioner—that Chen hold a Water-Land Retreat for him. Chen protested, saying that he was too poor to do so, yet Wu reminded him that he could simply have Wu's name added to the list of souls summoned during a communal performance of the ritual. Chen then asked where such a ritual would best be held and was told that Maple Bridge 楓橋—a district of Suzhou that was home to the Puming chanyuan 普明禪院, which was renowned for its grand Water-Land Hall—was an ideal spot.³⁷⁵ Agreeing to the ghost's requests, the following year Chen sponsored a place for Wu among the spirits summoned during a Water-Land Retreat performed at Maple Bridge; his niece, however, had already died from her affliction.

Certainly, the supernatural drama of this tale, like many in Hong Mai's collection, is arresting. Yet its general implications about the purpose of performing a Water-Land Retreat and the possibility of both individual and communal sponsorship of the ritual are nothing surprising, conforming largely with what we saw above in the passages from Zongze's manual. It is intriguing, however, that Hong Mai's story describes a Water-Land Retreat as being held specifically within the spatial context of a bridge—be it within a temple hall at the Puming Monastery or, perhaps, out-of-doors near a body of water. The ambiguity of the phrasing of the text, which does not specify that the Water-Land Retreat was held at the temple, seems to

³⁷⁴ On legal proceedings as a model for exorcistic practice in the Song, see Edward L. Davis, 87-114, esp. 102-107.

³⁷⁵ On this temple near the Maple Bridge, see Sun Di 孫覲 (1081-1169), "Pingjiang fu Fengqiao Puming chanyuan xingzao ji 平江府楓橋普明禪院興造記," 1146, in QSW, fasc. 3481, vol. 160, 378-380.

suggest, then, that a temple space was not necessarily required for the performance of the ritual; rather, it could be held anywhere that a ritual enclosure might be established. The paintings of the *Five Hundred Arhats* from Daitoku-ji, which we will revisit later in this chapter, also seem to confirm this; in the seventeenth painting, which we examined in the introduction to Part 1 of this dissertation, the Water-Land Retreat is depicted as being performed on an open-air platform (Figure 1.1), and the first painting in the series shows a monk performing an Arhat Offering Ritual 羅漢供 in an open-air wing of a layman's mansion, while servants array food offerings in front of icons hung in another hall of the structure (Figures 1.6 and 1.7). Interestingly, manuals for the performance of the Retreat of the Yellow Register, the Daoist ritual similar in many respects to the Water-Land Retreat, also specify that a location near a body of water is most appropriate for the performance of those segments of the ritual dealing with ghosts.³⁷⁶ In fact, ghosts are often described as having wet feet or wet clothes in other stories in Hong Mai's collection, for it was in water that they were thought to typically dwell; this, then, further confirms the appropriateness of constructing altars out-of-doors near water.

A Cosmic Twist

Given the cosmic scope of the pantheon summoned during the Water-Land Retreat, it is perhaps unsurprising that the ritual was frequently put to distinctly cosmic ends in both official and private contexts, being used in particular to supplicate or thank the heavens for rain, sun, or snow; to quell winds; or to realign or repay both Heaven and Earth. Writing in regard to this broadest function of the ritual at the end of the Southern Song or beginning of the Yuan dynasty, Xie Fangde 謝枋得 (1226-1289), for example, asserted that “if one wishes to repay the many

³⁷⁶ Mentioned briefly in Asano Haruji 浅野春二, “Girei to kumotso: *Mujō kōroku daisai rissei gi* wo chūshin ni 儀礼と供物: 『無上黄籙大齋立成儀』を中心に,” in *Dōkyō no kyōdan to girei* 道教の教団と儀礼, edited by Tanaka Fumio 田中文雄 et al. (Tokyo: Yuzankaku Shuppan, 2000), 120.

virtues of Heaven and Earth, there is nothing like the Great Retreat of [All Beings of] Water and Land 欲報乾坤厚德，無如水陸大齋。”³⁷⁷ Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137-1213), a prominent literatus and statesman from Ningbo perhaps best known for his account of his court-ordered northward journey as an envoy to the Jin dynasty, seems to have frequently performed the Water-Land Retreat in his capacity as a governing official in the South, controlling winds and summoning rain, thanking deities, and thereby realigning the relationship between Heaven and Earth³⁷⁸; in fact, he explicit links these three functions in a statement written for the performance of Water-Land Retreat to summon rain and control winds, a goal that is achieved by “thanking the great gifts of the ghosts and gods of Heaven and Earth 謝天地鬼神之大賜。”³⁷⁹ Interestingly, Lou Yue seems to have often performed the ritual in spaces both Buddhist and non-, including, for example, a temple to a local sea god 海神廟.

The Water-Land Retreat’s close connection to issues of a water control, an issue of perennial concern to officials at all levels of the state bureaucracy, comes to the fore in non-officially sponsored performances of the ritual, as well. Not only was the Water-Land Retreat performed to celebrate the completion of dykes and bridges, but also it was performed to reopen streams and wells that had run dry. Su Shi’s brother, Su Che 蘇轍 (1039-1112), performed a single-night Water-Land Retreat by the side of graveyard where a well had run dry; as part of these ritual proceedings, he also invited seven “Vinaya monks 戒律僧” to recite the seven-

³⁷⁷ Xie Fangde 謝枋得 (1226-1289), “Fushan wang shengchen shu 福善王生辰疏,” in QSW, fasc. 8219, vol. 355, 131.

³⁷⁸ See the various texts included in QSW, fasc. 6013-6016, vol. 266, 293-363.

³⁷⁹ Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137-1213), “Haishen miao rangfeng qiyu Shuilu shuwen 海神廟禳風祈雨水陸疏文,” in QSW, fasc. 6015, vol. 266, 341.

fascicle *Lotus Sutra* 妙法蓮華經一部七卷.³⁸⁰ The performance thus seems to have been intended to fulfill dual purposes—on the one hand, functioning as a mortuary commemoration for a deceased friend, and, on the other, serving as a ritual of cosmic reordering meant to please the local mountain spirit 山神 and to reopen the well, thereby ensuring the bounty of future crops.

Celebration and Syncretism

Scholar-officials' collected writings further reveal that the Water-Land Retreat was also frequently performed upon the completion of the construction of temple halls, bridges, and dykes.³⁸¹ Presumably, the same logic expressed by Xie Fangde underlies such performances: no other ritual was seen as equally effective in repaying the deities, both heavenly and terrestrial, whose beneficence permitted the completion of the project. In the context of such celebratory performances, it seems not to have been uncommon to hold rituals of other religious traditions together with the Water-Land Retreat. Writing on the occasion of a performance of the ritual to celebrate the completion of a bridge near Chun'an 淳安, in modern-day Zhejiang Province, on the first day of the twelfth month of the fifth year of the Qingyuan 慶元 era (1200), Hu Zhaoying 胡朝穎 (*jinsi* 1172) notes that “blood sacrifices were made to the Duke of the River, a Water-Land [Retreat] was held to benefit the ghosts of the drowned, and sacrifices and exorcisms were made to benefit travelers 且具牲牢以祭河伯，設水陸以薦沉魂，又將襪袂以利往來者焉.”³⁸²

Given the generic conventions of ghost stories that we noted above, this account takes on

³⁸⁰ Su Che 蘇轍 (1039-1112), “Dongying laoweng jing zhaiseng shu 東瑩老翁井齋僧疏,” in QSW, fasc. 2106, vol. 96, 338.

³⁸¹ See Li Zhiyi 李之儀 (1038-1117), “Luxi wei cheng xiu Shuilu daxie shu 路西圩成修水陸答謝疏,” in QSW, fasc. 2431, vol. 112, 293.

³⁸² Hu Zhaoying 胡朝穎 (*jinsi* 1172), “Chongxiu Baizhang qiao ji 重修百丈橋記,” in QSW, fasc. 6414, vol. 283, 22-23.

additional significance, for it shows a local community doing everything in their power—that is, making use of rituals of a broad array of sectarian affiliations—to ensure that spirits will remain firmly confined to their realms; in doing so, they seek to ensure that spirits will refrain from interfering in the human world, not even harassing figures as supernaturally susceptible as travelers.

Tales from the *Record of the Listener* further suggest the frequency with which the Water-Land Retreat was performed in conjunction with the rituals of other religious traditions. One story tells of a Fuzhou 福州 Earth God who was angered because his shrine had been disturbed and who had consequently stolen gold that a rich family had buried. The tale recounts that a shaman 巫 speaking on behalf of the Earth God recommended that sacrificial offerings 牲酒—both alcohol and, presumably, meat—be presented and that a Water-Land Offering be performed; upon the completion of these dual forms of offering, the Earth God returned the gold.³⁸³ Another tale gives a remarkable first-person account of a journey through Hell by a twelve-year-old boy who had been empowered as a ritual agent during the performance of a Retreat of the Yellow Register by a Daoist ritual master 法師.³⁸⁴ The boy recounts that a Hell official mentioned that whenever people perform the Water-Land Retreat and summon the officials of Hell by last name—a this-worldly practice—, he never goes, demanding instead that he and his colleagues be summoned by official rank. The tale thus directly suggests that the deities worshipped in one ritual are exactly the same as those worshipped in the other. The Water-Land Retreat and the Retreat of the Yellow Register are but different means to the same end.

³⁸³ “Yu Daizhi 余待制,” in YJZ, *jia zhi* 甲志, fasc. 18, vol 1, 162.

³⁸⁴ “Huang fashi jiao 黃法師醮,” in YJZ, *bing zhi* 丙志, fasc. 10, vol. 2, 448-451.

The Water-Land Retreat as Appeasement

Other texts suggest that just the opposite was also true—that is, that the Water-Land Retreat might also be used in a substitutive fashion, a Buddhist replacement for the blood sacrifices normally presented to local deities as a means of ensuring their continued beneficence. Such practices have a long history in China; monastery gazetteers and monk biographies are filled with tales of the various ways in which the earliest Buddhist missionaries in China converted local deities into followers of the Buddha and protectors of the dharma by Buddhicizing their sacrificial cults.³⁸⁵ These practices seem to have seen a resurgence in the Song—a perhaps not-unexpected reaction to the dramatic ascendancy in the numbers of local deities officially recognized by the state and to the rise of the cults of local deities that transcended their natal boundaries to develop into regional and even national phenomena.³⁸⁶ Daniel Stevenson has perceptively studied the example of the prominent early-Northern-Song Tiantai monk Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), a figure who was renowned for his attempts to bring lay practice into line with Tiantai orthodoxy and orthopraxis, and who devoted great energy to converting local deities in the Jiangnan region, ultimately seeking to convince both deities and their worshippers to abandon their carnivorous ways and to instead embrace the path and practice of Buddhism.³⁸⁷

Such concerns continued unabated in the Southern Song, and the Water-Land Retreat seems to have become an important tool in Buddhist monks' kit of practices of conversion and proselytization. The record for the completion of a Water-Land Hall 水陸堂 at Yanfu

³⁸⁵ See Robson, "Changing Places," 90-111.

³⁸⁶ See Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China*, and Von Glahn, *The Sinister Way*.

³⁸⁷ See Stevenson, "Protocols of Power," 340-408.

Monastery 延福寺 near Quanzhou 泉州, Fujian Province, written by the scholar-official Li Bing 李邴 (1085-1146) around 1135 describes the transformative logic and practice of the Water-Land Retreat in surprising detail.³⁸⁸ Moreover, perhaps better than any other account, it clearly outlines the general Confucian logic underlying middle-period Chinese performances of the Water-Land Retreat. The text begins, in fact, with an invocation of precisely such Confucian sentiments. Through a series of parallel examples—beginning with the family, continuing to the village, and ultimately to the state as a whole—, Li argues that a leader can only educate and transform his followers if his conduct is proper—that is, only if he is filial at home, if he follows ritual in the village, and so on, will he be followed; otherwise, his followers will be transformed in an opposite manner. Ultimately, Li suggests that spirits can be transformed in much the same way, though the process of transformation will be more difficult because spirits lack form and are difficult to trick.

This introduction leads Li into the primary content of his record—the conversion of a local deity at Yanfu Monastery and the construction of a Water-Land Hall to appease him. Li tells us that Yanfu Monastery had a shrine to a local deity known as Prince Tongyuan 通遠王, whose efficacy 靈 was the greatest in the entirety of the region of Min 閩 (Fujian). Every spring and winter, the sea-faring merchants from the region would make sacrifices to this deity in order to thank him for ensuring their mercantile success. Locals also sacrificed to this deity when praying for the end of droughts or floods and when seeking to be cured of diseases. Unsurprisingly, the shrine became extremely rich from these many sacrifices and offerings.

³⁸⁸ Li Bing 李邴 (1085-1146), “Shuilu tang ji 水陸堂記,” ca. 1135, in QSW, fasc. 3823, vol. 175, 61-63. The following paragraphs are a loose translation of the text.

Li then tells us that in the first year of the Shaoxing 紹興 era (1131), the Chan Master Huisui 慧邃 (act. early twelfth century) came to live in the temple. Thanks to his calm yet penetrating manner of controlling his body, and his simple yet grand manner of leading the masses, he very quickly came to be respected by the laypeople of the temple, who transformed their past habits according to his good example. Only the shrine to Prince Tongyuan remained unchanged. Huisui thus spoke sternly: “My teaching [i.e., Buddhism] sees sacrificial killing as a great taboo. The spirit’s relying on the Buddha to protect here is like a person in relation to his family or village. How can it be that they do not follow the teachings? This is not the intention of the spirit; it is simply that people are bound by custom.” Thus, he consulted a diviner to speak with the spirit about the possibility of substituting vegetarian feasts for the meat sacrifices to which he was accustomed. The diviner conveyed the deity’s seeming acquiescence. Thus, Huisui announced to the spirit’s worshippers, “My teaching has something called the Water-Land Assembly. It can transform the tips of daggers [of the Knife Mountain Hell 刀山地獄] into a golden Pure Land. It can transform the boiling cauldrons [of the Boiling Cauldron Hell 鑊湯地獄] into the flower ponds [of the Pure Land]. It can transform those with needle throats and fire beaks [i.e., hungry ghosts] into *devas*. It can transform the burning bronze and hot iron [of the Hot Iron Hell 熱鐵地獄] into fragrant rice. It can transform a single color or a single fragrance into something limitless; it can take the three realms of the ten directions and make a single assembly. None is greater than its virtue. If the spirit permits me to employ vegetarian sacrifices, I will use this ritual assembly to repay him, and I will give this space to the people as a place to pray for fortune. What do you think?” The assembled laity simply replied, “OK.”

Huisui then built a small room to the left side of the shrine, and in it he installed the sixteen seats for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. We are told that the space of the

hall was beautiful and majestic; the paintings glowed and were strictly arrayed. Without needing to persuade the people, the necessary material goods were collected; without needing to direct them, the work was completed. The work was begun in the second month of the fourth year of the Shaoxing 紹興 era (1134) and was finished in the sixth month of the following year. On a fitting day, the master established an altar in the hall to perform an Assembly of Great Bestowal 大施會 and bestowed the five precepts according to proper procedure. From this point on, the offerings of all who came to pray and thank the deity were used to perform the Water-Land Assembly; tens of millions in cash were used to save sentient beings and to pray for longevity. People no longer committed sins but performed good work, and the spirit came to appreciate these pure repayments. Ultimately, Li Bing suggests that the Water-Land Hall should be seen as a symbol of Master Huisui's using the precepts to establish a covenant between himself and the spirit. In doing so, the Buddha and the spirits were able to come together to arrive at the same path, and both people and material things were able to receive benefits from this. This thus ensured that the people of Quanzhou would be without plague and without disaster, that the yearly harvests would be on time, and that their lives would be long and peaceful. Li Bing ends his account with a litany of examples of past Buddhist masters who converted local spirits in a similar manner.

In many ways, this is a rather typical account of the conversion of a formerly blood-thirsty local deity into a follower of the Buddha, though the degree of detail that Li Bing provides about the process of bargaining with the deity is arresting. Further, Li Bing's record contains a remarkable wealth of information about the Water-Land Retreat as it was performed in the early Southern Song in southern China. From Li's mentioning the use of "sixteen positions," we can infer that it was Yang E's liturgy or a related variant that was being employed

at this particular temple in southeastern China, far from Yang E's homeland in eastern Sichuan; further, the record suggests that the ritual was performed using painted icons, not sculpted—something that seems to have been true throughout much of the history of the Water-Land Retreat. Moreover, the record suggests that the Water-Land Retreat was understood as having the power to transform Hell into Heaven, an image that recurs frequently in Song statements written for the ritual. That Master Huisui placed his Water-Land Hall next to the shrine to this local deity suggests that he specifically attempted to control the deity by encroaching directly upon the space occupied by that spirit. Indeed, despite the ostensibly Buddhist nature of the Water-Land Retreat, it seems to have been not uncommon to perform it on the grounds of shrines.³⁸⁹

Further, it is clear here that the Water-Land Retreat was understood as a technology of supramundane negotiation, a theme found in a number of records and tales from the Song. In this particular account, it is only thanks to Huisui's performing the Water-Land Retreat that the spirit would agree to abandon its carnivorous ways. Importantly, this negotiation is accomplished by means of a diviner, presumably someone like a spirit medium who specifically served this deity. Several tales in the *Record of the Listener* mention such negotiations with spirits. In a particularly vivid example, a local official in Haimen County 海門縣, Tongzhou 通州 (present-day Jiangsu Province), whose family suddenly started to experience supernatural disturbances, is said to have gone to the shrine of a local deity to ask why the deity had started to toy with him despite his having faithfully presented offerings to him.³⁹⁰ The official then promised to sponsor a Water-Land Retreat for the deity should he cease his mischief and redress

³⁸⁹ See, for example, Xie E 謝諤 (1121-1194), "Chongjian Shenggang miao ji 重建聖岡廟記," 1191, in QSW, fasc. 4873, vol. 220, 35.

³⁹⁰ "Haimen yanchang 海門鹽場," in YJZ, *ding zhi* 丁志, fasc. 3, vol. 2, 560-561.

his wrongs; otherwise, the official vowed to throw the deity's icon 偶像 into the sea and to burn his shrine. All immediately returned to normal. Yet when the official left his post, the spirit again began to harass the new official, killing his two children and nearly killing the official. While the Water-Land Retreat might appease spirits, a certain degree of strong-arming was also clearly necessary.

More broadly, and perhaps more interestingly, it seems that both Huisui and Li Bing conceive of the Water-Land Retreat as but one tool by which to civilize (教)化 local people. For Li Bing, such an understanding of the ritual fits neatly into line with the fundamental charge of the Confucian scholar-official; while Huisui employs similar language, we might imagine that his conception of “civilizing” must ultimately have been closer to something in the vein of proselytization. Through the performance of this grand ritual of universal salvation, both the scholar-official and the Buddhist proselytizer could ensure that all beings of Heaven and Earth were equally civil, thus bringing benefits to both the state and the church.

The Economics of Ritual

A very different perspective on the Water-Land Retreat—one centered solely on economic concerns—is provided by Hou Anshi 侯安石 (*jinshi* 1226), whose “Changsheng ku beiji 長生庫碑記” recounts the remarkable monetary expenditures of the Thirty-Ninth Daughter 三九娘 of the Wen 文 family of Shaozhou 韶州 (present-day Guangdong Province).³⁹¹ Hou begins his account with a brief comment on giving: it is rare, he says, that people take pleasure in donating, and even rarer that they find such pleasure that they come to donate without tiring. He then quickly transitions to evoking the general condition of women in his time. Confined to

³⁹¹ Hou Anshi 侯安石 (*jinshi* 1226), “Changsheng ku beiji 長生庫碑記,” in QSW, fasc. 7761, vol. 337, 16-17.

women's quarters in youth, they are later elaborately adorned so that they may be married off to other families; this is something that people cannot neglect, he tells us. However, in a particular family of scholar-officials, this did not happen; and instead, the family's daughter devoted herself to Buddhism, while neither marrying nor taking the tonsure. He then specifies his account, telling us of the Thirty-Ninth Daughter Wen (whom he reveals to be his father's cousin at the end of the stele), who grew up with an elder sister, a younger sister, and a brother in the absence of her parents. They protected each other for fifty-six years.

Having lived a frugal life and having consequently amassed a great deal of money, one day in 1214, the Thirty-Ninth Daughter made a vow to repay the virtue of her parents and to “build a path of fortune for the future rebirth of [her] sisters and brothers 併以修我姊妹兄弟來生之福道.”³⁹² Thereupon, she placed two hundred strings of cash in the “Longevity Storehouse 長生庫” of Nanhua Monastery 南華禪寺, dedicating one hundred strings to performing a Water-Land Retreat for the seventh seventh-day commemoration of her elder sister's death, dedicating the remaining one hundred strings to a performance of the ritual for her own seventh seventh-day commemoration, and using the interest on the deposit to perform annual offerings for her mother. She made a number of other donations, as well, dedicating one hundred twenty strings to performing a pre-mortem Water-Land Retreat for herself and for her younger sister, the Fortieth Daughter; devoting the interest from one hundred strings to annual retreats in commemoration of the birth and death of the Thirty-Eighth Daughter; dedicating the interest from a second group of one hundred strings to the performance of an annual retreat for the Fortieth Daughter; dedicating sixty strings for mortuary commemorations; and dedicating two sets of twenty strings to the purchase both of ritual implements for her family's “living shrine 生祠” and of oil lamps for the

³⁹² Ibid., 16.

living shrine and for the buddhas and patriarchs. Following the death of her elder sister and brother, she again made a series of donations: seven *liang* of yellow gold to craft a golden tablet for ritual use; forty-five strings of coins to sponsor a pre-mortem Water-Land Retreat for herself; and thirty strings to pay for offerings in the mortuary chapel to aid her younger sister in her next life. Hou ends with unsurpassable praise for Thirty-Ninth Daughter Wen: “One could say that her looking lightly upon money, her taking joy in donating like this, and her sincere bestowing without tiring like this, together exhaust her beauty; truly, among ten million people, there is not one [like her]! 其輕財樂設施如此，其誠施不倦如此，可謂兩盡其美，真千萬人中而無一人也。”³⁹³

Hou’s text thus gives us a very quantitative view of ritual performance and planning for one’s postmortem fortunes. Doctrinal or soteriological concerns have been suppressed so that attention can be given solely to financial interests. Salvation is quantified: one hundred strings of cash can buy a performance of a Water-Land Retreat for a single person, while one hundred twenty strings buys a performance for two people. In fact, Song texts, especially records of the construction of temple halls or the donation of images, are filled with data pertaining to the quantification of salvation. For example, a record of the reconstruction of a Water-Land Hall at Jin shan penned by Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019-1083) emphasizes that after the hall was destroyed in 1048, it was rebuilt for 1,300,000 cash—i.e., 1,300 strings³⁹⁴; meanwhile, a record for the reconstruction of the “Southern Water-Land Hall 南水陸堂” at the same monastery, which was composed by Zhou Fu 周孚 (1135-1177), indicates that the hall was rebuilt in 1174 for 11,000

³⁹³ Ibid., 17.

³⁹⁴ Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019-1083), “Jinshan si Shuilu tang ji 金山寺水陸堂記,” ca. 1049, in QSW, fasc. 1361, vol. 58, 146-147.

strings of cash and that a total of 706 images were crafted at an expense of 2,000 strings.³⁹⁵

Remarkably, Zhou's account begins with a purely quantitative reckoning of the new hall: we are told its precise dimensions, how many images it contains, how long everything took to complete, how much cash was required, and who donated how much. Given this primary interest in the statistical, one cannot help but think of Northern Song poems on paintings, villas, and peonies that invariably reveal how much cash had been spent to attain the desired object—a phenomenon unthinkable in earlier periods.³⁹⁶ One thinks, too, of the development of post-mortem banks in this period, institutions filled with the spirit money burned by the living for their ancestors.³⁹⁷ Even in matters of life and death, money was always on the mind in the Song. In texts, at least, the rational and empirical side of the paradox that I outlined in the Introduction to this dissertation easily triumphed over the irrational.

Traces of Methods of Performance

Vexingly, few of these scholar-official accounts give much sense of how, precisely, they performed the Water-Land Retreat. Nevertheless, these texts do give some indications that may be worth surveying, as they suggest the prevalence of certain methods of performance in different regions of the empire. For example, in announcement written for a campaign to raise funds for the construction of a Water-Land Hall at Luohan Monastery 羅漢寺 in Zhenjiang

³⁹⁵ Zhou Fu 周孚 (1135-1177), “Jinshan chongjian Nan Shuilu tang ji 金山重建南水陸堂記,” 1174, in QSW, fasc. 5822, vol. 259, 60-61.

³⁹⁶ See the discussions throughout Ronald Egan, *The Problem of Beauty: Aesthetic Thought and Pursuits in Northern Song Dynasty China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006), esp. 109-236, and 349-382. This theme was also extensively treated in a seminar on Northern Song poetry that Prof. Stephen Owen kindly allowed me to audit in Fall 2011.

³⁹⁷ See Hou Ching-Lang, *Monnaies d'offrande et la notion de trésorie dans la religion chinoise* (Paris: Collège de France and Institut des hautes études chinoises, 1975); and the review in Anna Seidel, “Buying One's Way to Heaven: The Celestial Treasury in Chinese Religions,” *History of Religions* 17, no. 3/4 (February-May 1978): 419-432.

Circuit 鎮江路 in the late Southern Song or early Yuan, Yu Delin 俞德鄰 (1232-1293), includes a number of small details that allow us to know that this particular temple was making use of Yang E's recension of the ritual, or at least a descendant of it.³⁹⁸ Specifically, Yu speaks of the importance of choosing a "great site," one of the major themes of the postface to Yang E's manual; further, Yu mentions that Emperor Wu of Liang referred to eleven sutras and *śāstras* when composing his rite, a detail mentioned by Yang E in his account of the origin of the ritual, which Zongze later changed to ten. Yu's text implies intimate familiarity with the history of the ritual: he refers to it as the "Water-Land [Retreat] of Zexin [Monastery] 澤心水陸," a reference to the mythical site of the ritual's first performance by Emperor Wu, and as the "esoteric classic of Fayun [Hall] 法雲秘典," a reference to the hall in which Emperor Wu searched the Buddhist canon for a manual by which to perform the ritual. Further, he speaks of "venerating the remaining methods of the Tianjian era 尊天監遺規," another reference to the earliest performance of the ritual by Emperor Wu in the fourth year of the Tianjian era (505). He refers, too, to the story of Ānanda's learning the method for saving hungry ghosts from the Burning-Face Ghost King, and he briefly mentions Chan Master Ying and the monk Yiji from whom Ying recovered the Water-Land manual in the Tang. It is absolutely clear, then, that Yu was relying on Yang E's manual, nearly two centuries after that text was first compiled and at a site near to Jin shan yet far from Sichuan. While Yu's text is important for its documentary value, one might also note that in so insistently displaying his knowledge of the particulars of the Water-Land Retreat, Yu seems to engage in a form of literary self-aggrandizement, displaying his knowledge largely to draw attention to his own achievements. Indeed, scholar-officials seem

³⁹⁸ Yu Delin 俞德鄰 (1232-1293), "Zhenjiang lu Luohan si muyuan jian Shuilu tang shu 鎮江路羅漢寺募緣建水陸堂疏," in QSW, fasc. 8285, vol. 357, 389.

often to have used the various records and ritual texts that they were so frequently invited to write as a locus for a certain display of self and of personal talents.³⁹⁹

Writing in the same period, Chen Zhu 陳著 (1214-1297) speaks of making use of Upper and Lower Halls 上下堂—the configuration that Yang E codified—, though he calls this method the “Mei shan Water-Land 眉山水陸” in reference to Su Shi.⁴⁰⁰ In a slightly earlier text, however, Lou Yue distinguishes between Yang E’s version of the retreat and Su Shi’s Mei shan recension.⁴⁰¹ He specifically states that “in recent years in the Jiangzhe region, the method of Master Su of Mei shan has largely been used; believers in the Southeast rarely see the ritual of Mr. Yang of Tongchuan 江浙近年，多用眉山蘇公之法；東南信士，罕見潼川楊氏之儀.”⁴⁰² Lou Yue then goes on to describe a performance of the “rarely seen” liturgy compiled by Yang E at Ayuwang Monastery in Ningbo. As was true with Yu Delin, Lou Yue, too, includes a number of references to Yang E’s mytho-history of the ritual; further, he emphasizes the participation of Sichuanese monks in this particular performance, mentioning that the temple had “gathered the streams of clouds and waters [that is, itinerant monks] from all of Shu, who all come to review 會全蜀雲水之流，俱來溫習”⁴⁰³ the ritual, and that “this [performance] relies on the assembly

³⁹⁹ On these points in regard to temple records, see Mark Halperin, *Out of the Cloister: Literati Perspectives on Buddhism in Sung China, 960-1279* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁴⁰⁰ Chen Zhu 陳著 (1214-1297), “Dai zhisun Changqi jian Shuilu shu 代姪孫昌七薦水陸疏,” in QSW, fasc. 8119, vol. 351, 190.

⁴⁰¹ Lou Yue 樓鑰 (1137-1213), “Yuwang zuo Tongchuan Shuilu shuwen 育王作潼川水陸疏文,” in QSW, fasc. 6016, vol. 266, 344-345.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 344.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

of Shu, who together perform the liturgy of Tongchuan 茲憑蜀道之眾，共演潼川之儀。”⁴⁰⁴ In other words, these various records make it quite clear that Yang E’s liturgy continued to be performed throughout the Song empire well into the thirteenth century, two centuries after its composition. Moreover, although the liturgy was associated with Sichuan, it obviously circulated well beyond Yang E’s natal place.

Strikingly, Lou Yue ends his text with a vow that through the performance of this liturgy, Ayuwang Temple will “eternally serve as a field for the gathering of fortune in the Southeast 永為東南集福之場”⁴⁰⁵ to guarantee the longevity of the emperor, suggesting, perhaps, that this single ritual performance will be virtually extended to eternity. An inscription for a Water-Land Hall on Tiger Hill 虎丘 near Suzhou penned by Fan Chengxiang 范成象 (*jinshi* 1135) in 1166 ends with a similar sentiment, suggesting that

earlier buddhas made prayers and vows for all sentient beings, and consequently, this dharma assembly will never extinguish; later people came together through compassion, and consequently, this dharma assembly will forever continue. If the power of vows and the power of compassion are without limit, this mountain and this assembly will also forever abide.

先佛以誓願為眾生，故此法會不斷滅。後人以慈悲同一契，故此法會常相續。願力、悲力無有邊，此山此會亦常住。⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 345.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Fan Chengxiang 范成象 (*jinshi* 1135), “Shuilu tang ji 水陸堂記,” in QSW, fasc. 4671, vol. 210, 363-365. This record includes a rich description of the Water-Land Retreat in general and of the construction of this hall in particular. Strikingly, Fan Chengxiang suggests that “in reading the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, [I] saw the intentions of the myriad buddhas and gained the origin of the teachings of the Water-Land [Retreat] 成象嘗讀《華嚴經》，見諸佛用心，得水陸起教之源” (ibid., 364). As we saw previously, while all variants of the Water-Land Retreat make extensive use of teachings from the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the Yunnan recension seems to particularly emphasize this text. One wonders whether this particular sectarian emphasis is a reflection of Fan’s own religious leanings or whether a Huayan-heavy variant of the Water-Land Retreat circulated near Suzhou during Fan’s lifetime. Writing several decades earlier, Li Mixun 李彌遜 (ca. 1085-1153) penned a highly Huayan-inflected epitaph for a monk in Jing County 涇縣, Xuanzhou 宣州 (modern-day Anhui Province), who not only performed the Water-Land Retreat more than two hundred times but also opened “Huayan fields 華嚴場” that brought together a million people, again suggesting an intimate connection between Huayan and the Water-Land Retreat and raising the possibility that a

Eternal, virtual ritual performance seems to have been on the minds of many during the period.

An epitaph for the eunuch Dong Zhongyong 董仲永 (1104-1165), who called himself Zhanran jushi 湛然居士, which was penned by the literateur and courtier Cao Xun 曹勛 (1098-1174), gives us an even more intriguing account of the possibility of harnessing non-human means to extend the benefits of ritual action.⁴⁰⁷ A particularly prominent proponent of Buddhism in the early Southern Song in the region near Hangzhou, Dong Zhongyong is celebrated by Cao Xun for having copied the four sections of the Buddhist canon by hand, for having sponsored the printing of a variety of sutras and spells, for having paid for the burials of travelers who had died far from home, and for having established a mortuary temple for abandoned corpses. Further, he not only sponsored Water-Land Retreats at four major temples near Hangzhou to assuage the souls of pestilence victims, burning a vast number of spells that he had specially printed for the occasion; but also he once copied both the Daoist *Salvation Scripture* 度人經 and the Buddhist *Diamond Sutra* 金剛經 and had them engraved on five stone pillars erected between the Yangzi and Huai Rivers 分峙江淮間 (that is, the border region between the Southern Song and Jin states) to benefit the ghosts of the war dead.⁴⁰⁸ In doing so, he said, “The grasses, trees, wind, and rain will aid the sound of the two scriptures, and will be able to carry over the souls of the dead 草木風雨，助二經之音，亦可超度亡魂.” Thus, non-

Huayan-inflected variant of the rite circulated in Anhui, as well. See Li Mixun 李彌遜 (ca. 1085-1153), “Xuanzhou Jing xian Tongfeng ruiying ta ji 宣州涇縣銅峰瑞應塔記,” in QSW, fasc. 3956, vol. 180, 346-347.

⁴⁰⁷ Cao Xun 曹勛 (1098-1174), “Dong taiwei muzhi 董太尉墓誌,” 1165, in QSW, fasc. 4208, vol. 191, 133-136. For more on Dong Zhongyong, see Ho Koon-wan 何冠環, “Xiancun de sanpian Songdai neichen muzhiming 現存的三篇宋代內臣墓誌銘,” *Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo xuebao* 中國文化研究所學報 52 (January 2011): 33-63, esp. 34-42.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., 135.

human means—in fact, a combination of the lithic medium of the *dhāraṇī* pillar and the natural media of plants and winds—were to serve to carry the sounds of aural spells, thereby creating something like an eternal, virtual ritual environment for the salvation of the dead. Such a statement develops the logic underlying the construction of *dhāraṇī* pillars set forth in texts like the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī-sūtra* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經, which suggests that the benefits of upholding the sutra will extend to all who come into contact with the pillar, even if only by passing through its shadow or by being graced with dust that had blown from it.⁴⁰⁹

The Material Culture of Adornment

Several accounts of the Water-Land Retreat mention the use or crafting of particular ritual paraphernalia, and it is clear that proper adornment of the ritual space was always considered a prerequisite to the successful performance of the ritual. Indeed, the monk Jujian wrote, “If you want to see saints and commoners come together [within the space of the Water-Land Retreat], then first you must first magnificently adorn 要見聖凡融會，必先輪奐莊嚴”⁴¹⁰; and other members of the monastic community argued that “the arousing of faith must begin with adornment 信之所起，必始於莊嚴.”⁴¹¹ Adornment could take many forms, both material

⁴⁰⁹ Multiple translations of the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī-sūtra* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 may be found in T19, no. 967-974. On *dhāraṇī*, see especially Paul F. Copp, “Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone: The Makings of Spells in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2005. Important discussions of the notion of eternal virtual ritual—in particular, the interplay among aural spells and permanent inscriptions—may be found in Youn-mi Kim, “Eternal Ritual in an Infinite Cosmos: The Chaoyang North Pagoda (1043-1044),” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2010, and Eugene Wang, “Ritual Practice without Its Practitioner?: Early Eleventh Century Dhāraṇī Prints in the Ruiguangsi Pagoda,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 20 (2011): 127-162.

⁴¹⁰ Shi Jujian 釋居簡 (1164-1246), “Chengtian zao Shuilu tang bang 承天造水陸堂榜,” in QSW, fasc. 6812, vol. 299, 26.

⁴¹¹ Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064), “Dongjing zuojie Yongxing huayan chan yuan ji 東京左街永興華嚴禪院記,” 1060, in QSW, fasc. 571, vol. 27, p. 88. Su Shi also gives us the beautiful image of poetry and painting themselves as a form of ritual practice. In an account of a set of arhats painted by the great late-Tang master Guanxiu 貫休 (823-912), which Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072) remounted in honor of his deceased daughter, Su writes that Guanxiu “used poetic lines to perform Buddhist ritual, and used cinnabar and malachite [i.e., painting] to make ritual spaces

and non-: Li Zhiyi, for example, speaks abstractly of chanting as adornment.⁴¹² A number of texts, however, give more precise insight into the types of material artifacts employed in adorning ritual spaces. In 1219 Zhang Ting 張珽 (act. early thirteenth century) writes of crafting twenty-four banners 幡幢 to be used “to adorn the Liturgy of This World and the Netherworld 以嚴冥陽之儀”⁴¹³; intriguingly, the number of banners used in this particular performance foreshadows the number of the seats of the spirits summoned in Zhuhong’s revision of Zhipan’s recension of the ritual. Meanwhile, the Daoist master Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194-1229) mentions the use of forty-two paintings in a particular performance of the Water-Land Retreat with which he was somehow associated⁴¹⁴; such a statement, when paired with announcements written by Zhou Nan 周南 (1159-1213), who mentions a “Water-Land Retreat of the Great Emperor Jade Thearch 玉皇大帝水陸齋,”⁴¹⁵ as well as a “Water-Land Retreat of the Dragon Palace in the Water Bureau of This World 陽間水府龍宮水陸齋,”⁴¹⁶ suggests that Daoicized versions of the Water-Land Retreat may well have been quite common by the thirteenth century, perhaps

以詩句為佛事，以丹青為道場。” See Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), “Zhuangbei luohan jian Ouyang gui shu 裝背羅漢薦歐陽婦疏,” in QSW, fasc. 2002, vol. 92, 219.

⁴¹² Li Zhiyi 李之儀 (1038-1117), “Huanyuan Shuilu zhai shu 還願水陸齋疏,” in QSW, fasc. 2431, vol. 112, 295, notes that “singing praises alone is sufficient as adornment 而歌揚贊唄，則僅足以莊嚴。” Li’s text includes a number of details suggesting his intimate familiarity with the ritual—both historical details, likely taken from Yang E’s mytho-history, and details about its performance, such as its emphasis above all on summoning.

⁴¹³ Zhang Ting 張珽 (act. early thirteenth century), “Changshu xian Huiji si xiuzao ji 常熟縣慧日寺修造記,” 1219, in QSW, fasc. 7211, vol. 315, 15-17.

⁴¹⁴ Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194-1229), “Hua Shuilu gongde shu 化水陸功德疏,” in QSW, fasc. 6757, vol. 296, 340.

⁴¹⁵ Zhou Nan 周南 (1159-1213), “Yuhuang dadi Shuilu zhai shuwen 玉皇大帝水陸齋疏文,” in QSW, fasc. 6697, vol. 294, 184.

⁴¹⁶ Idem, “Yangjian Shuifu Longgong Shuilu zhai shuwen 陽間水府龍宮水陸齋疏文,” in QSW, fasc. 6697, vol. 294, 184.

indicating continued attempts by Daoist followers to coopt the ritual for themselves, just as we saw in Du Guangting's fantastic tale about the ritual nearly three centuries earlier.

As noted in the Introduction to this dissertation, among the most common genres of Chinese liturgical art to survive from the Ming, Qing, Republican, and even contemporary periods is, precisely, that of “Water-Land paintings 水陸畫,” a catch-all term that includes hanging scrolls, murals, prints, and should, I will argue, extend to stone carvings, as well. Northern and Southern Song sources suggest that vast numbers of such works—which were sometimes referred to by this very term, “Water-Land paintings”—were produced in the period, as well. Yu Jing's 余靖 (1000-1064) 1060 account of Kaifeng's Yongxing Huayan Monastery 永興華嚴禪院 mentions that “in the first year of the Zhihe 至和 era [1054], the court brought out more than five hundred scrolls of painted icons for the Water-Land [Retreat] and gave them [to the monastery], and in the northwest corner [of the monastery] constructed a hall as a place for offerings 至和元年，內出水陸畫像五百餘軸賜之，乃即西北隅創造堂，為供設之所。”⁴¹⁷ As we saw earlier in this chapter, Zhou Fu indicates that the Southern Water-Land Hall at Jinshan, which was rebuilt in 1174, housed a total of seven hundred six images.⁴¹⁸ As we have already seen, Zongjian's *Shimen zhengtong* clearly indicates that by 1232, one hundred twenty icons were used in performances of the ritual in central and southern China,⁴¹⁹ and Jin-dynasty

⁴¹⁷ Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064), “Dongjing zuojie Yongxing huayan chan yuan ji 東京左街永興華嚴禪院記,” 1060, in QSW, fasc. 571, vol. 27, 88.

⁴¹⁸ Zhou Fu 周孚 (1135-1177), “Jinshan chongjian Nan Shuilu tang ji 金山重建南水陸堂記,” 1174, in QSW, fasc. 5822, vol. 259, 60-61.

⁴¹⁹ *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, compiled by Zongjian 宗鑑 (act. mid thirteenth century), 1232, fasc. 4, in X75, no. 1513, 304a.

stele texts suggest that one hundred twenty painted icons were routinely used in performances of the rite in their territory by 1164.

Further, the introduction to Su Shi's encomia for the sixteen paintings that he crafted for the performance of a Water-Land Retreat sometime around 1093 suggests that sixteen paintings were always used in Sichuanese performances of the ritual.⁴²⁰ Elsewhere, Su Shi even gives us a sense of what Water-Land paintings of his time looked like. In his reflections on the ethics of eating chicken eggs, Su notes that "among the painted images of the Water-Land [Retreat] of [Emperor] Wu of Liang, there are [depictions of] beings outside the Six Paths, which use light ink to make the forms of men, animals, birds, and beasts, which appear as though they are transforming in the middle of the void. 梁武水陸畫像，有六道外者，以淡墨作人畜禽獸等形，罔罔然於空中也."⁴²¹ This insistence on the use of light ink to render such forms may even be reflected in some extant Song-dynasty works, such as the seventeenth painting in the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* (Figure 1.1), discussed in the introduction to Part 1. In that work, monochrome ink and light vegetal colors are used to suggest ghosts' coming-into-form as they materialize within a misty void. Meanwhile, a thirteenth-century four-scroll set depicting twenty *devas* descending on clouds in the manner typical of Water-Land paintings, but which was instead likely crafted for the Golden Light Repentance Ritual 金光明懺法, uses ink and light colors in a similarly delicate manner (Figures 1.8 and 1.9).⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), "Shuilu faxiang zan 水陸法像贊," in QSW, fasc. 1989, vol. 91, 364-368.

⁴²¹ Idem, "Shi jiluan shuo 食雞卵說," in QSW, fasc. 1982, vol. 91, 212.

⁴²² On these paintings, see Takasu Jun 鷹巣純. "Aichi Kenshita no suiriku-ga kanren sakurei ni tsuite 愛知県下の水陸画関連作例について," *Aichi-ken shi kenkyū* 愛知県史研究 4 (March 2000): 113-128; and esp. Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔, Entry #193, "Dōbutsu nikyō shoson zu 道仏二教諸尊図," in *Bunkazai 2: Kaiga* 文化財 2: 絵画, in *Aichi-ken shi, beppen* 愛知県史, 別編 (Nagoya: Aichi-ken, 2011), 382-383. I thank Profs. Ide Seinosuke and Yukio Lippit for giving me access to the latter source.

The Visual Record: Recent Discoveries

Despite the production of such vast numbers of icons for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, very few such works have survived to the present. Nevertheless, over the course of the past two decades, the existence of a small body of Southern Song dynasty paintings likely produced in the context of the Water-Land Retreat have come to light in various temple and museum collections throughout Japan, as have several works that were acquired from Japan and that are now in Western collections. These works have been introduced, and preliminary interpretations have been put forth, by a small number of scholars, most notably Ide Seinosuke, Taniguchi Kōsei 谷口耕生, Takasu Jun 鷹巢純, and Yukio Lippit.⁴²³ Rendered in ink, colors—both vegetal and mineral—, and sometimes gold on silk, their composition is distinctly formulaic, as they simply depict great numbers of beings—generally, between ten and fifty—descending amid clouds. The dominant conceit is clear: these are beings, ranging from buddhas and bodhisattvas to hungry ghosts and Hell-dwellers, that have been summoned from the ends of the cosmos to assemble within a ritual space. Indeed, the notion of summoning as the essence of the Water-Land Retreat was one emphasized frequently in statements penned for performances of the ritual,⁴²⁴ and as we saw in the introduction to Part 1 of this dissertation, the Water-Land Retreat is typically conceptualized as an “assembly” above all else. Among extant Southern Song Buddhist paintings, three particular corpuses, which directly figure these notions of

⁴²³ In English, Yukio Lippit, “Ningbo Buddhist Painting: A Reassessment.” *Orientalism* 40, no. 5 (June 2009): 54-62, is the sole essay to have introduced these works. I sincerely thank Prof. Lippit for allowing me to present some of my own research on the Water-Land Retreat at a workshop that he organized on the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* at Harvard University in February 2012.

⁴²⁴ For example, Li Zhiyi 李之儀 (1038-1117), “Huanyuan Shuilu shu 還願水陸齋疏,” in QSW, fasc. 2431, vol. 112, 295, emphasizes that “if one wishes to bring together dark and light [that is, the netherworld and this world], it all depends on summoning 如接晦明，悉依召請,” also mentioning that “chanting and praising alone are sufficient for adornment 而歌揚贊唄，則僅足以莊嚴.”

summoning and assembly, can be directly linked to the Water-Land Retreat. Given the generally formulaic quality of the compositions of these works, they come to represent something like the pictorial equivalent of the modular textual statements that we examined earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless, there also exist several other bodies of works, which adapt the generic conventions of typical “Water-Land paintings” to more narrative ends; although the connection of such works to the Water-Land Retreat is ultimately more indirect, in the end, such works, counterintuitively, give more profound insight into the performance and open, transformative logic of the ritual.

Arhats, Sects, and the Transmission of the Dharma

Compositionally simplest, yet inscriptionally most directly connected to the Water-Land Retreat, is a depiction of eighteen arhats diagonally arrayed and descending among clouds, which is now in the collection of the Nara National Museum (Figure 1.10). The clouds, which occupy the greatest area of the composition, are depicted as areas of bare silk that are reserved from a dark sky rendered in a medium-gray ink wash, perhaps mixed with a blue vegetal pigment. Supporting the feet of some arhats, while obscuring the legs of others, the clumps of cloud matter are given a suggestion of volume through the careful application of light washes and lines. At upper left, narrow, horizontal bands of red cloud-like forms—reminiscent of Han-dynasty depictions of *qi*, the ethers that suffuse the universe—are laid atop the more volumetric cloud-escalators that convey the arhats. The arhats, meanwhile, are rendered as monks in a variety of guises—from that of a wild-haired, dark-skinned Western (that is, Indian or Central Asian) ascetic at upper left, to a wizened, white-haired old master at lower left; from a young man whose body is half occluded by clouds at middle left, to a red-hooded, wild-eyed Westerner reminiscent of the Chan patriarch Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 (act. fifth century) at lower left. The arhats are divided into two groups—an upper group, several of whose members bear sutras, that

is led by a blue-robed monk holding an incense censer, and a lower group, two of whom bear *ruyi* scepters, that is led by an armored attendant bearing a long banner.

It is the inscription on this banner that has led scholars to connect the painting to the Water-Land Retreat. The inscription identifies the beings who follow this armored attendant as the “myriad patriarchs and masters of the Chan sect, of the Tiantai and Vinaya [sects], translators, and seekers of the dharma of the ten directions of the *dharmadhātu* 十方法界禪宗教律譯經求法諸祖師.” As Taniguchi Kōsei has pointed out,⁴²⁵ this title is very close to that of the sixth class of beings summoned to the Upper Hall of Zhipan and Zhuhong’s version of the Water-Land Retreat—namely, the “patriarchs, masters, and monks of the Chan, Vinaya, and various sects who transmit and uphold the dharma of the ten directions of the *dharmadhātu*, together with their various attendants 十方法界傳持教法禪律諸宗祖師僧並諸眷屬.”⁴²⁶ In their text, Zhipan and Zhuhong then go on to list the patriarchs of the seven principal schools of Song Buddhism—Tiantai, Chan, Pure Land, Huayan (or Xianshou 賢首), Faxiang (or Cien 慈恩), Esoteric, and Vinaya—as well as famed translators, Chinese pilgrims to India, and Indian patriarchs themselves. As Taniguchi has suggested, the implements carried by the arhats thus begin to cohere: not only do they bear the texts—that is, material manifestations of teachings, here given the form of folded sutra booklets and glowing sutra cases—that they transmitted, but also they carry the ritual implements—*ruyi* scepters, incense censers, flywhisks, and even vases filled with lotus blossoms—necessary for the public transmission of those texts through lecturing.

More interestingly, perhaps, these various details suggest that the artist has partially reconceived the genre of paintings of the sixteen or eighteen arhats, transforming it to meet the

⁴²⁵ See Taniguchi Kōsei 谷口耕生, Entry #119, “Jūhachi rakan zu 十八羅漢圖,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 312.

⁴²⁶ FJSF, fasc. 2, 791a.

demands of the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. Although perhaps less well known than the sixteen- or eighteen-scrolls sets of individual, largely iconically depicted arhats that were probably meant to be the object of the offerings presented during the Arhat Offering Ritual, works that combine the sixteen or eighteen arhats within a single- or two-scroll composition also survive in some numbers from the Song and Yuan dynasties (Figures 1.11 and 1.12). These multi-figure compositions often present a highly narrativized vision of the arhats, integrating the arhats into a lived landscape in which they perform their supernatural feats. Other works, however, present compositions more similar to that seen in the Nara National Museum painting—that is, they simply depict arhats descending on cloud banks, a composition perhaps more amenable to liturgical use in grand rituals of assembly. One such work, depicting sixteen arhats diagonally descending on a cloud bank, exists in both a Song-dynasty original in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Figure 1.13), as well as in a later copy in the collection of Chishaku-in 智積院, a Shingon temple in Kyoto, Japan.⁴²⁷ While quite close in composition to the Nara National Museum work, the arhats depicted in these other works lack the specific textual and ritual attributes that define the Nara arhats as transmitters of the dharma; and most importantly, the composition lacks the banner-bearing attendant that leads the arhats to descend into the space for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. Such banner-bearing figures were to become a nearly ubiquitous element in all later Water-Land paintings (Figure 1.14); together with diagonally arrayed deities and the clouds on which those deities descend, these banner-bearers—or at least their inscribed banner, which sometimes simply takes the form of a non-banner-like cartouche—became defining features of the genre of the Water-Land

⁴²⁷ This work is attributed to the great monk-painter Minchō 明兆 (1352-1431) and is published as JT 53 001 in *Chūgoku kaiga sōgō zuroku* 中国絵画総合図録, edited by Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1982-1983), vol. 4, 73 and 570.

painting. Indeed, the Nara work may well be unique among extant arhat paintings in its use of the banner-bearer and in its conflating arhats with the patriarchs and dharma-seekers of the Chinese Buddhist past. Thus, I would suggest that the artist of the Nara work rather creatively rethinks two pictorial models—i.e., the single-scroll arhat painting and the Water-Land painting—, as well as two classes of venerated beings—namely, arhats and patriarchs—to create a work crafted specifically for the Water-Land Retreat that, at first glance, appears disappointingly generic.

The Six Paths of the Water-Land Retreat

A second group of paintings whose connection to the Water-Land Retreat is all but incontrovertible is held in the collection of the Shin Chion-in 新知恩院 in Shiga Prefecture. The works seem to take as their subject the beings of the Six Realms 六道 of rebirth—that is, *devas* (Figure 1.15), humans (Figure 1.16), animals (Figure 1.17), *asuras* (Figure 1.18), hungry ghosts (Figure 1.19), and Hell-dwellers (Figure 1.20). Each class is represented by ten figures—just as in Zhipan and Zhuhong’s liturgy, where most classes of the Lower Hall are exemplified by ten individual figures, as Taniguchi Kōsei has also noted.⁴²⁸ As in the Nara National Museum arhat painting, these various beings again descend in diagonal array atop roiling banks of clouds, which are rendered in monochrome ink lines and washes that define areas of bare silk reserved from a lightly ink-washed background. The clouds, however, have been given a more motion-filled form than in the Nara painting; cloud-heads well up as though they, propelled with divine momentum, collide with static bodies of earth-clinging air, while long, sinuous cloud-tails lead

⁴²⁸ See Taniguchi Kōsei 谷口耕生, Entry #123, “Rokudō-e 六道絵,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 313-314. On these paintings more generally, see Takasu Jun 鷹巣純, “Shin Chionin bon rokudō-e no shudai ni tsuite: suiriku-ga toshite no kanosei 新知恩院本六道絵の主題について —水陸画としての可能性,” *Mikkyō zuzō* 密教図像 18 (December 1999): 69-85.

back toward the heavenly place whence these spirits departed. The figures, meanwhile, are rendered with bold mineral pigments, standing out sharply from the ink clouds and background; pictorial materials themselves are thus divided by function, the more costly mineral pigments being used to depict, and hence venerate, the spirits that are being summoned to the ritual space. Importantly, the direction of the descent of the beings depicted in these six scrolls differs: the *devas*, animals, and hungry ghosts all descend from upper right to lower left, while the humans, *asuras*, and Hell-dwellers descend from upper left to lower right, suggesting that they all are converging around some central figure or scene, most likely the buddhas or bodhisattvas of the Upper Hall.

From the perspective of an inquiry into the Water-Land Retreat, it is the work that has typically been identified as a depiction of the “Human Path 人道” that holds greatest interest (Figure 1.16). The painting essentially presents an abbreviated pictorial history of the Water-Land Retreat, as Taniguchi and Takasu have both noted. The composition is divided into two registers. In the upper register, a youthful monk whose head is surrounded by a halo is approached by an emaciated, fire-breathing hungry ghost who holds his hands in a gesture of reverence. The allusion is clear: this is the Burning-Mouth Ghost King who entreats Ānanda, the young, gifted disciple of the Buddha, to perform a ritual of food bestowal on his behalf; as we saw in Yang E’s mytho-history of the Water-land Retreat, it was this ritual, not composed until the mid Tang dynasty, that ostensibly lay at the origin of Emperor Wu of Liang’s composition of the first manual for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. Meanwhile, in the lower register, we find eight male figures, two dressed in the garb of Song-dynasty scholar-officials, five in the robes of monks, and one, crowned like a king and leading the group, wearing a monk’s *kaṣāya* atop his imperial robes. This devout emperor is accompanied by one of the

monks, the most eccentric of the lot, whose feet are bare and who carries a shoulder-staff from which are suspended various implements. These iconographic attributes allow us to identify the monk as Baozhi, who guided Emperor Wu of Liang, the imperial figure leading the assembly, in his composition of the first liturgy for the Water-Land Retreat.⁴²⁹ The remaining four monks—one of whom bears a sutra booklet inscribed with the title *Jinguangming jing* 金光明經 (*Golden Light Sutra*), while engaging in conversation with the monk to his right, who carries a rolled scroll—and the two scholar-officials most likely represent six of the patriarchs of the Water-Land Retreat. The two Song-dynasty secular figures undoubtedly are Yang E and Su Shi; the identity of the monks, however, is more difficult to specify, though given the list of Water-Land patriarchs included in Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy, we might surmise that they represent Sengyou 僧祐 (445-518), who served as the cantor in Emperor Wu's performance of the liturgy; Chan Master Ying, who transmitted the ritual during the Tang; Chan Master Foyin 佛印禪師 (1032-1098), who performed the ritual at Jin shan in the Northern Song and who was a close associate of Su Shi; and Zongze, who expanded the liturgy in the same period. Of these monks, Zongze is known to have penned a preface to the *Jinguangming jing*,⁴³⁰ and Sengyou was renowned for his composition of texts, most notably, the *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集,⁴³¹ one of the first comprehensive records of the contents of the Buddhist canon; perhaps it is these two

⁴²⁹ On the iconography of Baozhi, see Matsumoto Eiichi 松本榮一, *Tonkōga no kenkyū* 燉煌畫の研究 (Tokyo: Tōhō Bunka Gakuin Kenkyūjo and Hatsubaijo Bunkiyūdō Shoten, 1937), 528-535; Makita, "Hōshi oshō denkō," 56-84; and Kita Shinichi 北進一, "Shin'i naru perusona no kōsō: Shisen-shō sekkutsu Hōshi oshō zō no hōkoku 神異なる仮面の高僧：四川省石窟宝誌和尚像報告," in *Shōchō zuzō kenkyū: dōbutsu to shōchō* 象徴図像研究：動物と象徴 (Tokyo: Gensōsha, 2006), 359-377.

⁴³⁰ See Zongze 宗蹟 (act. late eleventh century), "Jinguangming jing xu 金光明序," 1081, in *Jinguangming jing* 金光明經, translated by Dharmakṣema 曇無讖 (385-433), in T16, no. 663, 335a.

⁴³¹ *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集, compiled by Sengyou 僧祐 (445-518), in T55, no 2145.

who are depicted bearing texts. Thus, perhaps this painting is not one of a set of images of the Six Paths of rebirth but is instead a depiction of the class of Water-Land patriarchs, and perhaps it was only when this set of six works was imported to Japan by an unknown monk in the medieval period that it was reappropriated as image of the Human Path. Alternatively, this image may represent a fusion of a Human Path image with an image of the Water-Land patriarchs—that is, an image that serves a dual function. Indeed, perhaps we can imagine that this set of Six Paths paintings was combined with images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, and *pratyekabuddhas* in a set of paintings of the Ten Realms, as was ostensibly used by Shi Hao in his late-twelfth-century performances of the Water-Land Retreat near Ningbo.

An additional pair of paintings traditionally understood to depict astral deities, which is now in the collection of Zuisen-ji 瑞泉寺 in Aichi Prefecture, shares a similar composition—that is, ten brilliantly pigmented figures descending diagonally on monochrome clouds—, similar dimensions, and a similar color palette with the Six Paths paintings of Shin Chion-in, leading some scholars to suggest that they likely were part of the same original Chinese set (Figures 1.21 and 1.22).⁴³² The figures depicted are a diverse lot. In the right-hand scroll, Laozi and Confucius, each dressed in the robes of his religious tradition, are identifiable at upper right; they are joined by a figure bearing a memorial tablet and wearing an imperial mortarboard, four other tablet-bearing men dressed in kingly garb, three kings with their hands in a gesture of reverence, and a woman wearing a phoenix headdress and dressed as an empress. In the left-hand painting, a crazed, mallet-bearing figure at center-left has been identified as a pestilence god 五瘟使者; he is joined by a tablet-bearing official in a simple green gown, five men dressed as kings, a sixth man dressed as an emperor—but cloaked in a more elaborate robe than his counterpart in the

⁴³² See Taniguchi Kosei 谷口耕生, Entry #124, “Den Seishuku zu 伝星宿図,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 314.

right-hand painting—, and a lady—who again wears an elaborate phoenix crown, yet the sleeves of whose robe are feathered. Recently, in a presentation at the 2012 Bijutsu gakkai zenkoku taikai 美術史学会全国大会, Takashi Midori 高志緑, a Ph.D. candidate at Osaka University 大阪大学, suggested that these two paintings likely depict the second and third classes of beings summoned to the Lower Hall of Zhipan and Zhuhong's Inner Altar—namely, the emperors, officials, and various sages of the past; and the various bureaucratic deities of the earthly realm.⁴³³ Indeed, Confucius and Laozi, together with the various emperors, empresses, and kings depicted in the right-hand scroll, are specifically summoned in the former category, while the latter category includes pestilence gods of the type depicted in the left-hand scroll, as well as the various emperors, kings, and subsidiary deities of the terrestrial supramundane bureaucracy who seem to be depicted in this painting.

Buddhas and Beyond?

The basic compositional format of these Southern Song Water-Land works is shared by several other painted hanging scrolls from Ningbo that have also been argued to be connected to the Water-Land Retreat. One, in an American private collection, presents the Three Buddha-Bodies—that is, Vairocana, Rocana, and Śākyamuni—, Amitābha, and Maitreya, together with seven monks—depicted as backpack-bearing pilgrims transmitting texts from India—representing the seven major sects of Song Buddhism, and forty additional buddhas, descending diagonally from upper right to lower left amid rather flat, almost escalator-like bands of monochrome-ink clouds (Figure 1.23).⁴³⁴ Ide Seinosuke has suggested that this painting most

⁴³³ I thank Rachel Saunders for providing me with a copy of the handout from Takashi Midori's presentation, which should be published in a forthcoming issue of *Bijutsu shi* 美術史. Unfortunately, I was unable to contact Takashi Midori while writing this chapter.

⁴³⁴ Again, as in the Nara National Museum arhat painting, wispy, *qi*-like bands of clouds are depicted in the upper-left-hand corner of the work. As will be discussed in Chapter 2.1, such bands of *qi* became a common feature of

likely represents a synthesis of the first and fifth stations of Zhipan and Zhuhong's Upper Hall—that is, a combination of the class of the myriad buddhas, of whom Vairocana, Rocana, Śākyamuni, Amitābha, and Maitreya are all mentioned by name, and the class of the various patriarchs, translators, and dharma-seeking monks.⁴³⁵ As such, the painting may well suggest that it was crafted for an alternative liturgy for the Water-Land Retreat that no longer survives, or that the paintings used in ritual performances did not always distinctly separate the various classes of beings summoned to the Upper or Lower Halls of the ritual space (which would seem to contradict Zhipan's note in the *Fozu tongji* that he employed twenty-four hanging scrolls to represent the twenty-four classes of being summoned in his liturgy).

A set of two scrolls depicting approximately fifty arhat-like figures each, which are now in the collection of Chion-in Monastery 知恩院 in Kyoto, Japan, shares a number of similarities with the work in the American private collection (Figures 1.24 and 1.25). Most notably, their dimensions are almost identical, the escalator-like clouds are depicted in the same flat, band-like manner, and the mineral pigments of the figures' robes are of a similar vividness. This has led scholars to believe that these arhat paintings originally belonged to the same set of works as the work in the American private collection.⁴³⁶ More recently, Takashi Midori has suggested that the right-hand scroll of the so-called “arhat paintings” represents the class of *pratyekabuddhas*, while the left-hand scroll depicts arhats (“voice-hearers”) more properly—a not implausible suggestion given that many of the figures in the right-hand scroll are depicted with distinctive

later Water-Land paintings, such as the Yuan-dynasty murals at Qinglong si 青龍寺 in Shanxi Province, where the bands almost seem to suggest the conjoining of *yin* and *yang qi* to generate the cosmos, personified in the figure of Vairocana Buddha.

⁴³⁵ For a full analysis of this painting, see Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔, “Shoson kōrin zu,” *Kokka* 國華 1353 (vol. 113, no. 12; July 2008): 22-28.

⁴³⁶ See Taniguchi Kosei 谷口耕生, Entry #120, “Rakan shūe zu 羅漢集会図,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 312-313.

snail-shell curls covering their heads, a convention in East Asian depictions of *pratyekabuddhas*, while the figures of the left-hand scroll are depicted shaven-headed, as arhats typically are. Takashi has further suggested that these scrolls likely were used in performances of Yang E's sixteen-seat liturgy, and that the American scroll depicts a conflation of the first three classes of Yang E's Upper Hall—namely, the Three Treasures of the Buddha (represented as the five buddhas in front), the Dharma (personified by the seven sutra-carrying pilgrims), and the Sangha (suggested by the masses of buddhas descending behind the two other groups, and distinguished from the first group of buddhas by their far less elaborate haloes). This seems to me a decidedly intriguing possibility. However, the laconic nature of the extant sections of Yang E's liturgy makes definitive identification of paintings exclusively linked to this earliest of liturgies all but impossible. Moreover, Su Shi's encomia for the sixteen stations of the Sichuanese Water-Land Retreat suggest that the Three Treasures were to be depicted in three separate scrolls, which perhaps further reinforces the notion that these works were crafted for an alternate, albeit related, variant of the ritual.

A Narrative Turn and the Possibility of Ritual Self-Reference

The sets of Southern Song materials discussed above all conform closely to later (that is, Ming and Qing) models of the composition of typical “Water-Land paintings.” While specific iconographic details embedded in the works have allowed consideration of the precise ritual contexts for which the works were crafted, the formulaic, even modular, nature of the paintings has revealed little about the fantastic visual imagination that ultimately undergirds performances of the ritual. Several other sets of works from the same period, however, adapt the convention of the cloudy descent to more narrative ends, thus giving the viewer-worshipper privileged pictorial insight into the performance of the ritual itself. Compositionally most familiar, but narratively

most complex, is a depiction of Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory's taking a cloud-borne tour of an Earth Prison, which is now held in the collection of Hirokawa-dera 弘川寺 (Figure 1.26) in Osaka, Japan.⁴³⁷ Whereas all of the previous Water-Land paintings we have examined focus solely on the descent of deities, thereby emphasizing the liturgical function of the image to the exclusion of any narrative elements, this painting, which has been dated stylistically to the thirteenth century, embeds a diagonal descent within a sophisticated narrative framework that, as Takasu Jun has argued, closely links it to Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy for the Water-Land Retreat.⁴³⁸ The painting consists of three primary zones. In the uppermost register, we see the dagger-studded walls of an Earth Prison, behind which are visible the ink-wash silhouettes of still-shackled prisoners rushing toward the gate of the prison. Outside of that gate, a green-faced, red-robed demon drags a bedraggled, shirtless prisoner by his cangue, while three other prisoners follow. Partially obscuring the gate of the prison is a coral-colored cloud, on which the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha—identifiable by his shaven pate and by the pilgrim's staff and jewel that he carries—, a monk—most likely Daoming 道明, whose voyages through Hell are described in a number of Tang and Song texts,⁴³⁹ and who was claimed by Zongjian to have

⁴³⁷ A full account of this painting may be found in Takasu Jun 鷹巣純, "Hirokawa-dera bon Jizō jūō zu to suiriku-ga 弘川寺本地蔵十王図と水陸画," in *Han Ajia no bukkō bijutsu* 汎アジアの仏教美術, edited by Miyaji Akira Sensei kentei ronbunshū henshū iinkai 宮治昭先生献呈論文集編集委員会 (Tokyo: Chūō kōron bijutsu shuppan, 2007), 357-378. The following iconographic identification of figures is largely taken from Takasu's essay, in particular, the helpful line-drawing in *ibid.*, 359. Previous scholarship on the painting is reviewed in *ibid.*, 360-361. Extensive photographic documentation, including infrared and X-ray imagery, may be found in Takeda Kazuaki 武田和昭, "Yoshū jūō seishichi kyō no zuzōteki tenkai: Ōsaka • Hirokawadera zō Jūō kyō hensōzu wo chūshin toshite 『預修十王生七経』の図像的展開—大阪・弘川寺蔵十王経变相図を中心として," *Museum* 547 (April 1997): 5-28.

⁴³⁸ See *ibid.*, 367-374.

⁴³⁹ See Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, 66-69; and *idem*, "'Having Once Died and Returned to Life': Representations of Hell in Medieval China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48, no. 2 (December 1988): 433-464.

been the originator of Water-Land teachings⁴⁴⁰—and a red- and white-robed attendant, perhaps one of the tally-bearing messengers dispatched during the Water-Land Retreat to alert the beings of the Netherworld to the performance of the ritual, descend. From the jewel in Kṣitigarbha's hand, a ray of light extends toward the gates of the prison, as though the deity literally is bringing light to the gloomy recesses of Hell, a common trope in Song Water-Land statements. We can imagine that the imprisoned souls seen rushing toward the prison gate are, in fact, about to be released thanks to the divine intervention of Kṣitigarbha.

Another large cloudform dominates the middle register of the painting, obscuring the dagger-studded rocks that surround the prison. This cloud, which is rendered as reserved blank silk punctuated with swirls of wiry monochrome ink lines, and which is given a sense of volume through the use of washes of ink and perhaps a vegetal blue pigment, conveys a group of more than two dozen figures, including the Ten Kings of Purgatory—led by King Yama 閻羅王 and the King of the Mt. Tai 太山王, who are distinguished from the other kings by their imperial mortarboards (*mianguan* 冕冠)—, infernal officials, the Boys of Good and Evil 善惡童子, and a variety of demonic lackeys. The officials are, quite clearly, taking a tour of Hell.

Finally, in the lower register of the work, a red-robed messenger riding a white horse and bearing a banner that identifies him as the “Attendant who Leads All Dead Souls 統引領亡魂使者,” leads a train of ragged, white-robed male and female Hell-dwellers, who raise their heads

⁴⁴⁰ See *Shimen zhengtong* 釋門正統, compiled by Zongjian 宗鑑 (act. mid thirteenth century), 1232, fasc. 4, in X75, no. 1513, 304a, which notes: “The ‘Preface to the Manual for the Water-Land [Retreat]’ says: ‘The images originated with the Immortal Guolao (painted hanging scrolls by Zhang Guolao of the Tang dynasty); the teachings originated with the Monk Daoming’ 又水陸儀文敘曰：圖形於果老仙人(唐張果老畫幀)，起教於道明和尚。”

and hands in reverence to Kṣitigarbha above.⁴⁴¹ The horse-riding messenger, who is surrounded by a vegetal-red cloud that seems to propel him forward, is a figure that appears in many accounts of journeys to Hell, including the scriptural *locus classicus* for such imagery, the *Yuxiu shiwang shengqi jing* 預修十王生七經 (*Sutra on the Pre-Mortem Sevens of the Ten Kings*), where he is instead said to ride a black horse.⁴⁴² This discrepancy, together with the inscription on the messenger's banner, which is close to the title—namely, “Attendant who Pursues Dead Souls 追亡魂使者,” which uses the term “dead souls 亡魂” that appears nowhere in the *Yuxiu shiwang shengqi jing*—given to this messenger in the seventh class of spirits summoned to the Lower Hall of Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy, has led Takasu to propose that this painting should be linked to the act of “Breaking the Earth Prisons 破地獄” that takes place during the Water-Land Retreat, and not to the *Yuxiu shiwang shengqi jing*, as earlier scholars had suggested. Further, whereas most depictions of Hell and Purgatory imply the circulation of the soul or the worshipper through the ten courts of the Kings of Purgatory, here it is instead the kings who are sent on a supernatural voyage; in other words, the painting completely controverts the narrative that a viewer versed in textual accounts of Hell and Purgatory would expect. This upended scenario is precisely that which is at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat, which always involves summoning the kings away from their courts to assemble, cloud-borne, within the ritual space. It is the descent of the kings into the ritual space that is the subject of all depictions of them within the context of the Water-Land Retreat.

⁴⁴¹ In Huang, *Picturing the True Form*, 260-261, Shih-shan Susan Huang attempts to connect this painting to Daoist worship of the Ten Kings by virtue of the form of the attendant's banner, which she claims more closely resembles Daoist models than Buddhist.

⁴⁴² Other texts, however, say that he rides a white horse. See, for example, *Dizang pusa xiang lingyan ji* 地藏菩薩像靈驗記, compiled by Changjin 常謹, 989, fasc. 1, in X87, no. 1638, 592a.

This particular painting, however, complicates the scenario even further by placing the kings within the narrativized context of Breaking the Earth Prisons. Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy describes this scenario in great detail that well accords with the painted description. They write:

(The Cantor rings his bell to open the Earth Prisons and says:)

The Three Treasures bestow grace, and the Nine Heavens pardon. Of all those who have been summoned, none does not now come. Only the prisoners of the Earth Bureau are held by the firmness of the root of sin—the isolated of this world and that world, the separated dwelling in the center and in the margins. Iron nails pin their bodies; thus, their whole bodies are in pain. Stone mills grind their bodies; thus, their whole bodies are broken. Raging flames pierce their breasts with fiery redness; molten copper bathes their mouths, dripping wet. Stupefied in pain, they follow orders without understanding. This follows from the obstructions of their own karma; it is not the governor's lack of compassion. As for [the Emperor of] the Eastern Peak and his myriad ministers, the City Gods and the [heroes of the] various shrines, they mysteriously inspect this place, and truly have many followers. One's mutual connections with enemies and one's lack of resolving one's affairs can together impede and obstruct one's progress; none can then advance. If one has fallen from the Buddha's embrace, how can he achieve perfection in giving? Now, then, we will respectfully intone the *gāthā* and the spell, grandly opening the powerful spirit; with one strike, the closed prisons will open, and the sinning masses will rush out. Be they rich or poor, strangers or rancorous relatives, we hope that they all will reach the altar so that they may soak in our offering of the dharma.

Now I uphold the *Gāthā* of Breaking the Earth Prisons Spoken by Bodhisattva Forest of Awakening in the Huayan Assembly, and I intone the Mantra of Breaking the Earth Prisons, which can eternally release all prisoners suffering in Hell from that gloomy region so that they may be reborn on the noble path.

If one wishes to understand all the Buddhas of the Three Ages,
He should contemplate the original nature of the dharma realm, all [of
which] is only produced by the mind.

(The assembly together chants the *gāthā* seven times; more is even better.)

Om kharādīya sahā

(The assembly together intones thirty-seven times; more is even better.)

(The Ritual Master visualizes that with one rattle, the iron gates of the Earth Prisons of the Ten Directions all open. Within them all suffering is extinguished. All prisoners hear the sound of the spell and all recognize their fundamental mind [that is, their inherent buddha-nature]. Together they mutually report and come to the dharma assembly, seeking release. The Cantor rings his bell to open the path and says:)

Reaching both the past and the present, the Heavens and the Earth, all have moved to the summoning of their names, no longer abandoned to the void. All those who reside in sentience have exhaustively entered the Unobstructed Assembly. As for those who have generated the Ten Evils, they have long resided among the Three Mires [that is, the three lower Paths of Rebirth]. Even though they have made themselves change at this time, it is as though they have not passed through the former road. Their feet are caught between peaks and cracks, their bodies bound in the land of the dark. Given so many difficulties, how can goodness reach them? Relying on the power of Esotericism, we reveal the banner of brightness. With rays penetrating the paths of darkness, we hope that they will not to lose their way, so that they may safely pass along straight paths, and may happily know how to return. Only you noble souls, awaken to this expedient means!

My tathāgata-buddha has a mantra for opening paths, which I now respectfully intone:

...

(After intoning the spell three times, [the Cantor] clangs the cymbals.)

(The Ritual Master visualizes that within the Three Mires, the innumerable beings that have been obstructed by evil karma and have lost their way mount the power of this spell and are thus able to gain this great level path to come to the dharma assembly.)⁴⁴³

This section of the liturgy presents a remarkable vision of the suffering of beings in Hell and the power of the Esoteric ritual technologies controlled by the Cantor and the Ritual Master to save those beings. Through the recitation of spells, the manipulation of implements such as cymbals and bells, and precise visualizations, the ritualists are able to free the myriad Hell-dwellers so that they may assemble within the space of the Water-Land Retreat. In so doing, these beings are freed of past karmic shackles and are, ultimately, able to be sent off to be reborn. All of the essential elements of the liturgical scenario are present within this remarkable painting from Hirokawa-dera. Deceased souls are pictured in shackles, in the midst of being freed, and in the

⁴⁴³ FJSF, fasc. 3, 806c-807b.

act of being led forth by the “bright banner” carried by the horse-mounted attendants. The Kings of Purgatory and their various attendants are shown in motion, a motion that can be interpreted both as their inspection of the sinning souls under their charge and as their descent into the extra-pictorial space of the ritual enclosure itself. Kṣitigarbha, while not mentioned by name in this section of the liturgy, nevertheless is intimately connected to the “*Gāthā* of Breaking the Earth Prisons” that is recited; one might imagine that it is thanks to the recitation of this *gāthā* that the bodhisattva has descended into Hell to open the gates of the Earth Prisons with the divine light of his jewel. In depicting these acts, the painting thus gives us direct insight into liturgical acts that, in the context of the ritual performance itself, take place solely within the mind of the meditating Ritual Master. It is through the medium of painting, then, that we viewer-worshippers may understand the ultimate import of the abstruse sounds and actions, and hidden visualizations, of the ritual officiants. Indeed, the painting becomes something like an explanatory argument for the efficacy of these actions.⁴⁴⁴

Narrative Inversions at Bei shan Niche 253

Surprisingly, an early, conceptually related example of this very same inversion of the typical Ten Kings narrative is also to be found among the cliff carvings of Dazu County discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation. Notably, Niche 253 at Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain) depicts the Kings of Purgatory, the beings being judged in their courts, and the deities that might save those suffering beings and carry them over to be reborn into a different realm (Figure 1.27). As we saw earlier, the niche is inscribed on the proper-left-hand side of its façade with a short dedicatory text that indicates that while the niche is likely to have been first carved

⁴⁴⁴ I thank Prof. Robert Campany for sharing his thoughts on paintings and miracle tales as arguments for the efficacy of ritual acts in his response to my presentation at the 2013 Association of Asian Studies conference in San Diego.

in the mid tenth century, it was (re-)painted in 994, and a Water-Land Retreat was performed by its sponsors to celebrate the ultimate completion of the niche in 1001.⁴⁴⁵ Although the niche clearly was not crafted *for* a performance of the Water-Land Retreat, its iconography nevertheless shares important soteriological overtones with the celebratory ritual performed by its sponsors. Significantly, the artisans' method of suggesting those shared salvific overtones constructs an implied liturgical narrative scenario that brings it into close dialogue with the Hirokawa-dera painting crafted more than two centuries later in a region far removed from southeastern Sichuan.

Taking the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha as its central focus, Niche 253 emphasizes the place of these savior deities within the narrative of the postmortem peregrinations of souls.⁴⁴⁶ Both deities are depicted standing on lotus blossoms, carved in high relief from the rear wall of the meter-and-a-half-tall niche. Avalokiteśvara, standing at proper right, holds a *kuṇḍikā* and wears a crown with a seated figure of the buddha Amitābha, her typical iconographic attributes. Kṣitigarbha is depicted, as expected, in the guise of a shaven-headed monk. Above the two figures floats a jeweled canopy, in front of which fly two aspsarases 飛天 (Figure 1.28). On each side wall of the niche are carved—again in relatively high relief—six circular forms filled with figures (Figures 1.29 and 1.30). Each form is outlined with clouds, the tails of which are depicted rising upward, thus implying that these figures are flying down into the space of the niche.

⁴⁴⁵ For the inscription, see MWL, 72-73, and the Introduction to this dissertation.

⁴⁴⁶ The iconography of these two deities, as well as their various depictions through North Mountain and elsewhere in Sichuan, is treated in Suchan, "The Eternally Flourishing Stronghold," 455-485 and 509-525. On this niche, in particular, see *ibid.*, 521-524.

Several of the cloud-forms on the niche's wall at proper left bear cartouches with inscriptions identifying the figures. The inscription on the cloud at upper-left reads "□ *guang wang* □廣王," or "King Guang [of Qin]," the first of the Ten Kings of Purgatory (Figure 1.31). The king is identifiable as the figure at left, who wears an elaborate crown that should bear the character for "king 王." To his left stand two attendants of similar scale. All three figures hold memorial tablets, wear long robes, and are canopied by simple circular forms; the king is distinguished from his attendants only by his crown. The inscription on the cloud at upper-right reads "King [of the Five] Offices □官王," the fourth of the Ten Kings (Figure 1.32). Unlike the figures in the first cloud, here the king is significantly larger than the two figures that stand at his side, and it is only the king, whose face and headgear are largely effaced, who is canopied. Another large attendant figure stands behind the other three. Though as large as the king, he does not wear a crown, and he holds a largely effaced object in his hands. Through comparison with the remaining four cloud-forms below, it becomes clear that the club-like form that the attendant holds is, in fact, the support for the canopy covering the king. It becomes clear, too, that the two smaller figures typically make gestures of supplication toward the king, thus suggesting that they are the spirits of the deceased who are being judged. The only other legible inscription is that on the cloud-form at middle-right, which reads "Great King of Mt. Tai 太山大王," the title of the seventh of the Ten Kings. The remaining three clouds all share the same composition and depict three more kings in the set. The king at middle-left wears the distinctive military garb sometimes used in early depictions of the Tenth King, the "King who Turns the Wheel [of the Five Paths of Rebirth] [五道] 轉輪王."

The cloud-forms on the wall at proper-right do not bear cartouches; however, given that the composition of five of the cloud-forms corresponds exactly to those of the cloud-forms on

the opposite wall (with the exception of the first cloud-form at upper-left, which, as we saw, bears only three figures, yet is inscribed as depicting the first of the Ten Kings), it is clear that these five clouds also bear Kings of Purgatory and that, possibly, the cloud-form at upper-left on the opposite wall was misinscribed. The final remaining cloud-form on the upper-right-hand corner of the wall at proper-right is largely effaced but appears to depict a figure in military garb riding on a horse, presumably an infernal messenger like the “Attendant who Leads All Deceased Souls” pictured in the Hirokawa-dera painting (Figure 1.33).

The message behind this niche is clear: a direct appeal to the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha can ensure one’s easy passage through judgment in the courts of the Kings of Purgatory and can, by extension, enable rebirth into a higher path of existence. Such a message and such an iconography is, of course, most commonly associated with the performance of funerary rites every seventh day for seven weeks after a person’s death, as well as on the one-hundredth day, one-year, and three-year anniversaries of that person’s death. However, as with the Hirokawa-dera painting, this niche inverts the typical narrative that one might expect in the context of depictions of the Kings of Purgatory; that is, rather than depicting the deceased soul’s journeying through the courts, perhaps being carried away to salvation by Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha along the way, here, it is instead the kings who descend to assemble within the space of the niche. Like the iconic buddhas and bodhisattvas that typically anchor a space for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, the iconic, salvific bodhisattvas serve as the node around which the lesser bureaucratic functionaries assemble. This depiction of descent and assembly thus brings the niche into line not only with the Hirokawa-dera painting, but also with the general conceit of Water-Land-related compositions that we have come to expect.

The link between Niche 253 and the Water-Land Retreat mentioned in its inscription is, thus, not a direct, practical one. A ritual could never have been performed in the very small space of the niche, nor is it likely that a ritual would be performed immediately outside of it.⁴⁴⁷ Instead, it is in the notion of assembly—a notion not found in typical Ten Kings compositions—, as well as in the insistence on the possibility of a spirit's being ferried over into a higher realm of rebirth shared by both niche and ritual, that a compelling connection is to be found. This cross-medium interest in reconciling liturgical narratives of divine descent with the need for iconic images of savior deities suggests that carvers and painters from the tenth century onward were actively working to respond to the new demands that liturgies of grand assembly, such as the Water-Land Retreat, placed on the composition of images. As will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2.3, the role of clouds in this narrative that so completely inverts our expectations of the Ten Kings deserves particularly sustained attention.

Cosmic Visions and Ritual Actions: The Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats*

Moving away from images that share compositional or narrational connections to the Water-Land Retreat, we find two final sets of visual materials that, through the expansive vision of the cosmos that they embody, perhaps best exemplify the open logic of the Water-Land Retreat—a logic shared by multiple rituals in the period, yet a logic that is perhaps given clearest expression in the exhaustive listing of the classes of beings summoned during the Water-Land Retreat. I would argue that these works make a compelling case for seeing the Water-Land Retreat as providing a general conceptual model of an expanded Buddhist cosmos for artisans and ritualists throughout the Song empire. The more familiar of the two bodies of works is the set of one hundred Southern Song hanging scrolls known as the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats*.

⁴⁴⁷ Rather, any ritual activity at Bei shan probably took place in a temple—likely the temple, once much larger, that stands beside the twelfth-century pagoda known as the Many Treasured Tower 多寶塔.

The other, less familiar group is composed of the thirteen Northern Song niches of a site known as Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain) in Dazu County. The connections between these sets of materials and the Water-Land Retreat are less direct than in any of the other works and sites we have examined thus far; however, I will argue that that indirectness actually exemplifies the openness of the Water-Land Retreat itself, a ritual that, as we have seen, has been remarkably protean over the course of its existence.

As has already been briefly mentioned earlier in the introduction to Part 1 of this dissertation, the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* were painted by the studios of Zhou Jichang and Lin Tinggui between 1178 and 1188 for a small cloister, the Huian yuan, near the shores of Lake Dongqian 東錢湖 outside of Ningbo. The set's place of production remains under debate; generally thought to have been produced in Ningbo, they also share certain stylistic similarities with works from the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou.⁴⁴⁸ Thanks to inscriptions written in gold ink that survive on forty-eight of the paintings—which are rendered in monochrome ink, colors both vegetal and mineral, and gold on silk—, we are able to know that the scrolls were sponsored by individual members of the lay community near Huian yuan, as well as throughout the region more broadly.⁴⁴⁹ Their donations were solicited by the monk Yishao 義紹, who, over the course of the decade, seems to have circulated in wider and wider circles throughout the Jiangnan region, ultimately securing donations from patrons as far away as Pingjiang 平江 (modern-day Suzhou), Tongzhou 通州 (modern-day Nantong 南通, Jiangsu Province), and

⁴⁴⁸ On the production and style of these works, see especially the essays included in *Daitoku-ji denrai Gohyaku rakan zu: meibun chōsa hōkoku sho* 大徳寺伝来五百羅漢図: 銘文調査報告書 (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2011). See also Shih-shan Susan Huang, “The Triptych of *Daoist Deities of Heaven, Earth and Water* and the Making of Visual Culture in the Southern Song Period (1127-1279),” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2002, 129-147.

⁴⁴⁹ For photographs and transcriptions of all of the inscriptions, as well as analytical essays on their import, see *Daitoku-ji denrai Gohyaku rakan zu*.

Xiuzhou 秀州 (modern-day Shanghai). While the names of many of the patrons do not appear in extant historical records, the geographic distribution of the villages in which many of the donors resided, the fact that the Huian yuan was located near to a shrine to two local heroes who were worshipped for their ability to control waters, the fact that Lake Dongqian underwent extensive dredging in the 1170s under the leadership of the Prince of Wei, Zhao Kai 魏王趙凱, and the fact that multiple members of two donor families associated with water management—the Gus 顧 and the Chens 陳—are mentioned in the painting inscriptions has led Ide Seinosuke to suggest that the set is likely to have been produced as part of this broader campaign of water management in the Lake Dongqian region.⁴⁵⁰ Indeed, Arhat Offerings Rituals seem to have been frequently performed throughout the Song in order to control flooding, and it seems most probable that the works were produced for precisely such a ritual.⁴⁵¹ Ide has also speculated that the uninscribed scrolls in the set were likely donated either by the Prince of Wei or by Shi Hao, who remained an active patron of Buddhism in Ningbo in the 1170s and 1180s.

Although the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* most likely were crafted for the performance of the Arhat Offering Ritual, they do not simply depict the arhats in purely iconic form; rather, these divine figures are integrated into sophisticated narrative scenes, which have been well studied and described by Ide and Wen Fong, whose 1956 dissertation remains the sole monograph devoted to the works.⁴⁵² A number of these narrative scenarios are specifically liturgical in nature and include important connections to the Water-Land Retreat, which, as we saw earlier in this chapter, was frequently performed at the “Water-Land Altar of the Four

⁴⁵⁰ Ide, “Daitoku-ji denrai *Gohyaku rakan zu shiron*,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 257-258.

⁴⁵¹ On the Arhat Offering Ritual, see Bong Seok Joo, “The Arhat Cult in China from the Seventh through Thirteenth Centuries: Narrative, Art, Space, and Ritual,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2007, 291-342.

⁴⁵² Fong, “Five Hundred Lohans at the Daitokuji.”

Seasons” sponsored by Shi Hao on Mt. Yuebo and at the nearby Zunjiao yuan, both of which were located only a few kilometers from the Huian yuan on the northern shore of Lake Dongqian. The seventeenth painting in the set specifically depicts a group of five arhats performing the Water-Land Retreat for the benefit of a variety of ghosts and other spirits, who are seen coming into form in the mists beyond the edge of the platform occupied by the arhats (Figure 1.1). A scroll in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, meanwhile, depicts Emperor Wu of Liang bowing in reverence to the monk Baozhi, who is shown in the act of peeling back the skin of his face to reveal his true form, that of the Twelve-Headed Guanyin 十二面觀音 (Figure 1.34); the painting thus very clearly refers to the two mytho-historical composers of the first Water-Land liturgy, who were, of course, also worshipped in other contexts during the Song. In the foreground of the work are depicted two painters, seemingly portraits of Zhou Jichang and Lin Tinggui, sketching this miraculous transformation, while a monk—whose face resembles that of Yishao, depicted and identified by inscription in the second scroll of the set (Figure 1.35)—stands behind them. The painting refers to an episode in the *Fozu tongji* wherein the famed painter Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (act. early sixth century) failed to capture Baozhi’s true form.⁴⁵³ The painting thus hubristically suggests the superiority of Zhou Jichang and Lin Tinggui to this great master of the past, as they succeed in rendering that which one of the greatest masters of Chinese painting history failed to render.

Several other works present ritual actions that conceptually fall within the orbit of the Water-Land Retreat. The first scroll in the set, for example, depicts a group of arhats descending into a ritual space, wherein a group of lay people follow a monk in performing an Arhat Offering Ritual (Figure 1.6). This scroll, together with the twenty-fourth scroll in the set, which shows a

⁴⁵³ FZTJ, fasc. 37, 348b-c.

kingly figure—who might also be interpreted as a stand-in for a Ritual Master—leading a group of arhats into a palatial ritual hall, will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 2.3 (Figure 1.36). Further, two other scrolls show arhats in the act of distributing food to hungry ghosts (Figures 1.3 and 1.37); one, in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, seems to be specifically modeled on the story of Ānanda’s bestowal to the Burning-Face Ghost King (Figure 1.37). In this work, the arhat who stands in for Ānanda, depicted proportionally larger than the four arhats and one attendant who surround him, scoops rice from a large bowl and presents it to the half-naked, emaciated hungry ghost that stands in front of him. This ghost holds his hands in a gesture of begging, while flames stream from his mouth. His body and ragged clothes, which are depicted solely in monochrome ink and light brown vegetal pigments, contrast sharply with the brilliant mineral pigments of the arhats’ robes. This is a type of coloristic contrast that recurs throughout the set, where ghosts, hungry ghosts, and the poor are invariably rendered as though on the cusp of invisibility, harkening back to Su Shi’s description of the monochrome beings outside of the Six Paths. This painting, then, presents a scene that can be read two ways, both as the simple depiction of food bestowal and as the origin of the Water-Land Retreat, wherein a hungry ghost is transformed into a follower of the Buddha through the power of bestowal. Another painting, meanwhile, depicts the transformation of a boiling cauldron in Hell into a lotus pond—an image that can be found in many Song statements for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat—as five arhats tour these infernal depths on cloud-back (Figure 1.38). Other liturgically focused works depict the commonly performed rituals of the “Release of Living [Beings] 放生”—that is, freeing living beings that might typically be eaten, such as fish, turtles, or birds, back into their natural habitat or into a “Pond for the Release of Living [Beings] 放生池” near a monastery, an act performed by both monks and laity alike (Figure 1.39)—, the reading

and transcribing of sutras (Figure 1.40), the veneration of images (Figures 1.41 and 1.42), generic rites of funerary offering (Figure 1.43), and the ritual of “Ascending the Hall 上堂” (Figure 1.44), during which an abbot, who here takes the guise of a bodhisattva, lectures or engages in dialogues with the monastic community.

The remaining works in the set depict activities from the daily life of monks, such as the mending of clothes or the shaving of hair (Figure 1.45); miracle tales related to Mt. Tiantai 天台 [T], the mythical origin place of the Five Hundred Arhats (Figure 1.46); the performance of supernatural feats by the arhats (Figure 1.47); fantastical tales from the history of Chinese Buddhism, such as Xuanzang’s journey to India (Figure 1.48); and the presentation of offerings to the arhats by myriad beings, including animals, humans, and members of the supramundane bureaucracy (Figure 1.49). The paintings thus map out a vivid, decidedly open picture of the myriad aspects monastic life in the Southern Song, as well as of the cosmos more generally.

This is a uniquely Song product; in no earlier period do we find such an emphasis on pictorializing the lives of monks in all their minutiae, nor do we find such a cosmos populated by myriad non-Buddhist deities. Significantly, the set includes Thunder Gods, the Official of Water, and Earth Gods, among others, all of whom are shown presenting offerings to the arhats, implicitly acknowledging the superiority of Buddhism to the Daoist and vernacular religious traditions in which these spirits were first conceptualized. Meanwhile, a variety of ghosts and demons serve as attendants to the arhats, presumably converts to the path of the Buddha who have been saved through the ritual activities—such as the Water-Land Retreat, so frequently emphasized in the set—performed by these divine monks.

Indeed, I would suggest that the decidedly open conception of the cosmos and of Buddhist practice more generally that is given its most complete expression in the Water-Land

Retreat—a conception that brings together figures both Buddhist and non-, yet that insistently subordinates those non-Buddhist spirits to the lofty, enlightened deities of the Upper Hall—lies at the heart of the cosmic vision pictured in these scrolls. Unlike earlier transformation tableaux, which give us visions of Pure Lands far distant from our world, or which show the Buddha himself preaching on a this-worldly Vulture Peak that, nevertheless, is depicted as a place far removed from the familiar space of the Middle Kingdom, the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* are clearly predicated upon an accessible, combinatory model of the cosmos in which Buddhist beings and the indigenous spirits of China whom they dominate share the same geographic and pictorial space. Moreover, I would contend that a conceptual correlation may also be established between the open ritual syntax of the Water-Land Retreat, which consists of an amalgamation of individual, modular rites that can also be performed independently, and the various ritual activities depicted in these scrolls; after all, almost all of the activities depicted in this set could both stand alone as independent rites and be performed within the context of the amalgamative construct of the Water-Land Retreat. The Water-Land Retreat again seems to serve as an ideal model for understanding popular Song Buddhism and its most important, and innovative, visual productions.

Shizhuan shan and the Cosmic Logic of the Water-Land Retreat

Stepping backing in time approximately a century before the crafting of the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats*, and returning both to the medium of stone carving and to the region of Dazu County with which this dissertation began, we find another distinctive, albeit little-known, group of stone carvings at the sprawling site of Shizhuan shan that necessarily point to many of

the same issues raised by the Daitoku-ji works.⁴⁵⁴ The diversity of the figures depicted in the niches at Shizhuan shan gives us further material through which to reflect on some of the less direct connections between ritual and image-making, connections that lie at the level of a shared modular, personalized conception of the pantheon to be invoked. As we saw in the Introduction to this dissertation, Shizhuan shan contains two taciturn inscriptions mentioning the performance of a single Water-Land Retreat at or near the site in 1088. These inscriptions are to be found on a niche depicting Confucius and his ten disciples (Figure 1.50) and on a second niche, completed in 1082 as the first niche at the site, depicting the cosmic buddha Vairocana, the historical buddha Śākyamuni, and the future buddha Maitreya (Figures 1.51 and 1.52).

The site as a whole consists of thirteen sculptural niches carved into two cliff faces approximately 1.5-kilometers apart,⁴⁵⁵ as well as a small pagoda (Figures 1.53 and 1.54) and a temple, known as Fohui si 佛惠寺 (also written 佛會寺), that today survives in a Qing-dynasty reconstruction (Figure 1.55). All of this was sponsored by a single patron, Yan Xun 嚴遜, who constructed his private Buddhist ritual space at this mountaintop site between 1082 and 1096. A portrait of this pious patron may be seen in the niche dedicated to Avalokiteśvara located on the distant cliff face (Figures 1.56 and 1.57), as well as among the figures surrounding the three buddhas.

⁴⁵⁴ Shizhuan shan has recently been treated in Zhou Zhao, “The Unified Three Teachings in the Rock Carvings of the Song Dynasty in Chongqing and Sichuan,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Heidelberg University, 2010, esp. 52-91.

⁴⁵⁵ Ten of these niches have been visible since their carving; the remaining three, located on a once-landslide-covered cliff in an area that now is part of Rongchang County 榮昌縣, were only rediscovered in 2003. See Yang Fangbing 楊方冰, “Dazu Shizhuan shan shiku zaixiang buyi 大足石篆山石窟造像補遺,” *Sichuan wenwu* 四川文物 (January 2005): 6-8 and 55. A painted inscription on the niche depicting Guanyin ends with a Guangxu 光緒-era (1875-1908) date, thus suggesting that the landslide occurred sometime in the twentieth century.

In 1090, midway through the completion of the carving of these niches, Yan carved a stele—entitled, rather menacingly, “A Record Warning People against Damaging the Various Venerated Images and Felling the Trees Cultivated around the Niches and Pagoda 警人損動諸尊像及折伐龕塔前後松柏栽培記”—that explains his motivations for constructing the site.⁴⁵⁶ A copy of the stele, likely dating to the Ming dynasty given the text on its verso, stands in the main hall of Fohui si; the original stele, which was erected among the cliff carvings on the distant cliff, was rediscovered in 2003 when the child of a local farmer happened upon three niches of stone sculptures that had been covered by a landslide many years earlier (Figure 1.58). In the stele, Yan Xun lays out the bleak conditions of his spiritual life, which ultimately led him create this private Buddhist retreat:

I have read the writings of the Buddha, have carried out practices throughout the years, and have held retreats for many days. [However,] having been born at the end of the Buddha’s dharma, I am not intimate with the Buddha’s assembly. I cannot invite the gods down, as I am far distant from the time of the Buddha. [Indeed,] I have longed to perform Buddhist rituals but was not able. Thus, I am expending all my energy to carry this out, spending 500,000 coins to purchase a renowned spot called “Stone Seal Mountain” in the area where I live. [Here] I have cleared the cliffs to carve a total of fourteen images.⁴⁵⁷

予讀佛書，年體修行，持齋有日矣。生佛末法，不親佛會，不與勸請，去佛時遠，思作佛事而莫之能也。於是稱力復斯，以錢五十萬購所居之鄉勝地曰石篆山，鑿崖刻像凡十有四。

Yan was clearly concerned about a number of things, particularly his distance, both spatial and temporal, from the buddha Śākyamuni. Indeed, he explicitly mentions his having been born at “the end of the dharma 末法”—the period in the tri-partite conception of Buddhist time when the teachings of the Buddha would reach the pinnacle of degeneration before being renewed with the

⁴⁵⁶ MWL, 326-327.

⁴⁵⁷ MWL, 326. The “fourteen images” include the pagoda that stands at Fohui Monastery; thus, I consider the site to include only thirteen image-filled niches.

arrival of the future buddha Maitreya. While this concept frequently appeared in Chinese Buddhist writings of the Six Dynasties (220-589) and Tang, it seems to have appeared relatively infrequently afterwards, except in texts penned by worshippers living under the rule of the Liao dynasty of northern China—spatially far distant from, though temporally quite close to, Yan Xun in southeastern Sichuan.⁴⁵⁸ To overcome the seemingly inexorable decline of the dharma, Yan Xun would create his own space suitable for the descent of deities and for the performance of rituals. Significantly, that ritual space would be structured around a carefully planned collection of images that would be rendered in the eternally present medium of stone.

As the following passage in Yan Xun's stele shows, he seems to have had a remarkably cosmic vision of which deities should be included in his private pantheon. In Yan's own words, those niches include:

1) the niche of the buddhas Vairocana, Śākyamuni, and Maitreya; 2) the niche of the buddha Tejaprabhā and the Eleven Luminaries; 3) the niche of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara; 4) the niche of the King of Longevity; 5) the niche of the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra; 6) the niche of the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha; 7) the niche of Taishang Laojun [Laozi]; 8) the niche of King Wenxuan [Confucius]; 9) the niche of the Monk Zhigong [Baozhi]; 10) the niche of the Medicine King, Sun the Perfected; 11) the niche of the Sage Mother [Hārītī]; 12) the niche of the Earth God; 13) the niche of the eternally dwelling Mountain King [; and 14)] the niche of the inscription of the Fohui Pagoda.

曰毗盧釋迦彌勒佛龕，曰熾盛光佛十一活曜龕，曰觀音菩薩龕，曰長壽王龕，曰文殊普賢菩薩龕，曰地藏王菩薩龕，曰太上老君龕，曰文宣王龕，曰志公和尚龕，曰藥王孫真人龕，曰聖母龕，曰土地神龕，曰山王常住佛會塔記龕。⁴⁵⁹

Yan Xun's carving of multiple niches of non-Buddhist deities despite his explicit self-

identification as a follower of the Buddha should give us pause. What is such an eclectic array

⁴⁵⁸ The concept of *mofa* in the Liao is discussed especially in Hsueh-Man Shen, "Realizing the Buddha's 'Dharma' Body during the Mofa Period: A Study of Liao Buddhist Relic Deposits," *Artibus Asiae* 61, no. 2 (2001): 263-303.

⁴⁵⁹ MWL, 326. The rest of the text consists primarily of instructions to Yan Xun's descendants, warnings against desecrating his ritual site, and local miracle tales. A rough translation of the full text is included in Zhao, "Appendix 1," 1-4.

of deities doing here—with figures ranging from the cosmic buddha Vairocana to the astral buddha Tejaprabhā, from the founders of the Three Teachings to the local Earth God, from the most revered bodhisattvas to Zhigong and Hārītī? What sort of logic subtends this vision, and how is that vision given visual form?

The niches at Yan's mountaintop sanctuary generally follow two compositional formats—that of iconic, high-relief assemblies and that of low-relief, individual images—which speak to a hierarchical conception of the deities' importance. The preeminent niches—such as those depicting the three buddhas, Confucius, Laozi (Figure 1.59), Kṣitigarbha (Figure 1.60), and Tejaprabhā (Figure 1.61)—all take the form of iconic assemblies. In the niche of the three buddhas—which is likely to have been considered the focal point of the site given that it was completed first, that it is named first in the stele, and that the 1088 performance of the Water-Land Retreat was recorded on its façade despite its having been completed six years earlier—, these three primary figures are shown seated atop lotus thrones supported by coiled dragons. They are depicted fully frontally, and nearly fully in the round, as though to directly engage with the viewer-worshipper. In between these main buddhas, standing figures of bodhisattvas and monastic disciples—as well as a lay man and a lay woman, most likely representing Yan Xun and his wife—are rendered in slightly lower relief, and hierarchically smaller in scale. These figures bear texts and offerings, as though assembling to pay homage and listen to the teachings of the exalted buddhas. The fineness of the carvings—the detail given to the figures' robes, for example, and to the crown worn by Vairocana—possesses an affective power that enlivens this otherwise static composition, with its figures frontally arrayed one after the other.

Moreover, if we look to the heads of the buddhas, as well as to the heads of certain disciples, we see that small, rolling bands of clouds have been carved to each side, seemingly

propelling these grand figures to manifest within the space of the niche (Figure 1.52). Meanwhile, on each side of the façade of the niche are to be found demonic earth spirits supporting massive pillars—clearly modeled on the form of *dhāraṇī* pillars—that served as the inscriptional ground for the brief records of the Water-Land Retreat performance in 1088 mentioned earlier. Fearsome, weapon-bearing *vajrapāṇi* watch over these earth spirits; billowing banks of clouds, now partially damaged, seem to propel them forth (Figure 1.62). Again, the seemingly static quality of the niche is enlivened through these fine cumuloid details—a motif that, as we shall see especially in Part 2 of this dissertation, took shape within the context of the Water-Land Retreat.

The same general compositional and cumulous conceit holds true in other niches, as well. The seated Tejaprabhā and the standing astral deities that he governs are supported by a bank of clouds that surrounds their entire niche (Figure 1.61). In the niche depicting Kṣitigarbha—who, his feet supported by lotus blossoms, sits on a raised platform among the ten seated Kings of Purgatory and myriad standing attendants—, another small cloudbank surrounds the head of the bodhisattva, as though suggesting his manifestation among these infernal bureaucrats (Figure 1.60). In the niche of Laozi and his disciples, the deity again sits at center, leaning on a three-legged arm rest 三足憑幾, surrounded by standing immortals, whose faces and robes have become highly stereotyped, as though they were but modular studio productions (Figure 1.59). However, surrounding the heads of most of these figures, we again find wisps of clouds. Even around the heads of Confucius and his disciples, figures far more this-worldly than their Buddhist and Daoist counterparts, are flowing banks of clouds to be found propelling the figures to assemble within their otherwise highly stable, static niche (Figure 1.50). Other, slightly inferior figures, including Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra (Figure 1.63), Avalokiteśvara (Figure

1.56), and Hārītī (Figure 1.64), are also given comparatively large niches and rendered in high relief, verging on the fully round; and in the niche of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, clouds fill every available surface.

The niches at the site crafted for comparatively lower-ranking deities, such as the Earth and Mountain Gods (Figure 1.65), the Medicine King Sun (Figure 1.66), and the monk Baozhi (Figure 1.67), however, take the form of comparatively low-relief carvings representing the deities either alone or in pairs. With the exception of the niche depicting Baozhi, these niches are all almost completely eroded, making identification and description of the figures rather difficult. However, it is clear that a hierarchy in terms of the type and quality of carving has been established to differentiate the loftiest, more transcendental deities summoned to the site from the more humble, this-worldly figures who guard the sanctuary or ensure the this-worldly fortunes of its patron. Baozhi is shown carrying a carpenter's square and scissors, and leading a young attendant from whose shoulder-pole hang a grain measure and hand-broom—his typical iconographic attributes, seen even in the Shin Chinon-in depiction of the “Human Path.” Significantly, a small raised plaque has been carved above the head of the attendant, and in it has been inscribed a playful story recounting a dialogue between Emperor Wu and Baozhi regarding a “prescription for immortality.” Using quasi-Daoist language, Baozhi transforms the basic tenets of Buddhism—compassion, ascetic endurance, the perfection of the six *pāramitās*, etc.—into the quantifiable ingredients of a pill 丸, pounded with a *vajra* club 金剛杵, that can be taken to achieve awakening.⁴⁶⁰

Through his sponsorship of these niches that spatially define the bounds of Shizhuan shan, Yan Xun has, in effect, established a personal pantheon that covers all dimensions of time and

⁴⁶⁰ MWL, 316.

space, that will ensure salvation from the infernal depths, that will bring worldly benefits, and that will protect local lands—in other words, deities whose powers mirror that of the Water-Land Retreat, which Yan performed midway through the completion of his private place for the eternal performance of Buddhist rituals. Śākyamuni, Laozi, and Confucius point us to the past, while Maitreya points us to the future. Tejaprabhā takes care of the stars, while the Earth Deity and the Mountain King take care of Shizhuan shan itself. Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha both deliver the condemned from Hell, while the King of Longevity and the Medicine King take care of more immediate, worldly cares. Baozhi, the monkish adviser to Emperor Wu of Liang, and Hārītī, a demon-mother converted to be a protector of the dharma by the Buddha himself, may appear to be outliers, but they are the linchpins in this whole scheme. Baozhi was, of course, one of the mythical progenitors of the Water-Land Retreat, whose all-embracing cosmic pretensions seem to be given full expression in Yan Xun's pantheon. Hārītī, though popularly worshipped as a bringer of children, is the paradigmatic object of rites of food bestowal; indeed, the Vinaya 律 prescribes that monks are to make daily offerings of food to her to prevent her from reverting to the violent, dharma-threatening ways of her past.⁴⁶¹ If a rite involves bestowal of food, either alimentary or spiritual, she is a useful figure to include, and not surprisingly, she often appears in Ming and Qing Water-Land paintings.

Thus, it seems highly likely that in conceiving this private Buddhist paradise, Yan Xun chose to create a pantheon that shares in the general cosmic logic of the Water-Land Retreat. While the list of deities carved here does not correspond precisely to the list of deities included in any of the early Water-Land Retreat manuals, many of the essential types of figures are all

⁴⁶¹ The Vinaya account of Hārītī's conversion is actually included in SSTL, 105b-106a. The inclusion of this passage in this compendium of texts related to rites of food bestowal indicates the importance of Hārītī to the whole tradition of such rites.

included.⁴⁶² The pantheon has, in essence, been abstracted and personalized, just as, as I have been arguing all along, it was meant to be. This is not to say, however, that Stone Seal Mountain was created exclusively for performing the Water-Land Retreat.⁴⁶³ All of the deities depicted here could and probably were worshipped independently. Certainly, too, the site lacks depictions of beings such as arhats and *pratyekabuddhas*, which appear in every codified variant of the Water-Land Retreat, and it seemingly overemphasizes the place of Confucian and Daoist figures. Yet as we saw with the stele at Shibi Monastery, which privileges the role of Daoist deities and Daoist rites almost to the exclusion of their Buddhist counterparts, the pantheon summoned to performances of the Water-Land Retreat in this remote region of Sichuan often differed greatly from that summoned to more conventional performances in the metropolitan areas of the coast. Rural Sichuanese worshippers, I would suggest, seem to have readily recognized the malleable nature of the Water-Land Retreat. Moreover, the inclusion of Baozhi—who was, certainly, worshipped independently as a thaumaturge, though far less frequently than similar figures such as Sengqie 僧伽 (act. late seventh to early eighth century), and who also appears at several sites in Sichuan, though never as an independent figure⁴⁶⁴—, coupled with the epigraphic records of the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, strongly suggests that Yan Xun had the ritual in mind as he was designing this private, multi-use sanctuary. I would argue, then, that the site

⁴⁶² See also Hou Chong, “Shizhuan shan shike,” 176-178, and Zhao, 85-91.

⁴⁶³ Based on ink inscriptions of liturgical verses of unknown date brushed on some of the niches at Shizhuan shan, Hou Chong, “Shizhuan shan shike,” 165-178, argues that Water-Land Retreats actually were performed at the niches themselves. This seems questionable to me, as from the Ming onward, if not before, the nearby Fohui Monastery included both a “Retreat Hall 齋堂” and a main image hall that housed a number of free-standing icons. On the layout of the monastery during the Ming, see Zhang Bi 張壁 (act. ca. 1500), “Zhuan chongxiu Fohui si beiji 撰重修佛惠寺碑記,” 1499, in MWL, 342-343. Given the presence of such structures at the temple, the great distance among the various cliff carvings, and the general lack of flat space on which to establish altars near the carvings, I am inclined to imagine, then, that rituals probably were performed in the space of the temple rather than at the cliffs.

⁴⁶⁴ See Zhao, 58.

shows a close conceptual correlation to the Water-Land Retreat. It serves as an exemplification of the open, syntactic logic inherent to the ritual, which embraces all beings, regardless of sectarian affiliation, and allows them to be both worshipped and converted to the Buddha's path. As such, like the Water-Land Retreat itself, Yan Xun's private retreat may serve as a metaphor for Song religion more generally, speaking, on the one hand, to the all-embracing, cosmic, and syncretic tendencies seen in religious practices throughout the period, and, on the other, to the increasing power of the laity in determining their own ways of worship.

Conclusion: A Return to Shibi si

At the end of this survey of the textual and material traces of the Song-dynasty Water-Land Retreat, I wish to ascend again to the hill-top monastery in Shibi Township, whose villagers carved a group of images in 1210, performed a Water-Land Retreat, and recorded the general contours of their liturgy and the pantheon summoned on a stone stele intended to last for eternity (Figure 0.2). Ultimately concerned with both the salvation of a specific relative—the Seventh Daughter of the Zhang family—and the rebalancing of their community's relationship to the realm of ghosts and to the cosmos more generally, these villagers crafted images that speak of heavenly ascent, of exorcism, and of a descent into the infernal reaches of the Netherworld. Through their performance of a Buddhist ritual that propitiated Daoist deities and that incorporated Daoist rites, they ensured that their ancestors would be freed of past karmic ties and would ultimately ascend to a higher path of rebirth.

In many ways, the various texts and images that we have examined throughout this chapter have little in common with these images and this stele from the rural reaches of southwestern China; indeed, the more conventional works that we have analyzed, all crafted in the metropolitan centers of the Song empire, cannot help but bring into relief the uniqueness of

this rural lithic text and the tableaux surrounding it. Nowhere else have we encountered a liturgy transcribed with such precision in a medium typically reserved only for the commemoration of grand building projects. Nowhere else have we seen a pantheon recorded in such detail. While ghost stories speak of communal performances of the ritual, nowhere else have we seen a whole community—the majority of whose members actually share the same last name (Liang 梁)—come together, without the leadership of a local official, to take charge of their collective well-being by organizing a great exorcistic ritual. Further, while we have gained a good sense of the inherent syncretism of the Water-Land Retreat, we have generally seen the dominance of Buddhism within that syncretic scenario; at Stone Wall Monastery, however, Daoist deities are almost privileged in both image and text, and the recitation of Buddhist mantras seems to have been valued just as greatly as ritual procedures—such as the tossing of tablets to the Officials of Earth and Water—appropriated from Daoism. In other words, the Shibi stele, and the highly syncretic images that accompany it, presents a rather specific, even peculiar form of the Water-Land Retreat—one far distant from the purified, rigorously Buddhist form that Huizong strived so futilely to enforce and from the canonical variants that sought to subjugate all spirits to the Buddha. These are images and a text that bring us as close as we might ever get to the lived experience of the Water-Land Retreat in the Song dynasty, wherein the inherently malleable, modular character of the ritual was fully embraced.

But perhaps most interestingly, the Shibi si stele is a text whose material form gives it a tangible sense of eternity that other writers—like Shi Hao, Lou Yue, and Fan Chengxiang—could only pray for. Indeed, in transcribing a liturgy—including especially the oral mantras recited during the course of the performance of the ritual—on a stone stele, the officiants seem to imply a desire to continue the very performance of the ritual *ad aeternam*. The ephemeral

becomes eternal through this striking utilization of the lithic medium. The open, malleable form of this ritual becomes eternally fixed (though consequently opened to scholarly inquiry). The next part of this dissertation, however, will disturb this momentary sense of fixity through close attention to the ever-changing forms of clouds, a motif whose ubiquity in the images and texts of the Water-Land Retreat spurred profound reflection on the mediational acts of both representation and ritual.

PART 2 | Nebulous Intersections: The Water-Land Retreat and the Rise of the Liturgical Cloud

Introduction

From the ninth century onward, and gaining momentum particularly during the Song dynasty (960-1279), Chinese Buddhist liturgical art took a nebulous turn. Clouds quickly became ubiquitous. Nowhere was this truer than in artworks produced in the context of the Water-Land Retreat. While clouds (*yun* 雲)—the ascendant, almost divine ethers (*qi* 氣) of mountains and streams¹—first emerged in Chinese Buddhist art in the fifth century, appearing with some frequency in transformation tableaux (*bianxiang* 變相) of the late sixth onward, in the ninth century, these cumuloid masses gained an increasingly visible, varied, and important presence. No longer relegated solely to the margins of larger compositions, the motif took on a wide range of forms and functions, serving as everything from a decorative ornament on ritual implements or the bases of pagodas, to a convenient marker separating space cells within larger compositions; from a pictorial shorthand for the passage of time and/or space in narrative compositions, to a means of supramundane conveyance, carrying deities, the deceased, or the faithful from one world to the next. Most importantly, however, clouds increasingly served to simultaneously separate and suture the realm of the mundane from that of the supramundane—or the real space of the human world from the represented space of the divine. Like its natural model, this pictorial motif became, quite simply, omnipresent and protean. As such, the cloud can be said to assume a certain natural or self-evident quality within later Chinese Buddhist art; indeed, it is almost impossible to find a work of Chinese Buddhist art from the Song and after

¹ This definition is largely taken from the first fully systematized dictionary of the Chinese language, the second-century CE *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters*). See Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58-ca. 147), *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, fasc. 11, pt. 2, 9a; SKQS edition. Further pre-modern definitions of clouds are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.2.

that does not, in some way, incorporate a cloud. These cumuloid bodies thus become, in a sense, ubiquitous to the point of being easily taken for granted.

The issue of the ubiquity of the motif, as well as the concomitant assumptions concerning the stability of its meaning, remains even if we focus our attention solely on a particular type of cloud, as I will largely do in the following pages. Indeed, I will concentrate on images that make use of clouds as a signifier of the permeable boundary between the human world and the worlds of deities, simultaneously separating and conjoining these realms. As I will show, the clouds in such images serve especially to convey deities from their world to ours or to suggest their act of spontaneously manifesting in our mundane realm. More specifically, these images use such clouds to convey *icons*—that is, deities that are the object of ritual practices, be they as simple as the periodic presentation of incense by a lay person or as complex as the invocations and offerings performed during something like the Water-Land Retreat. In these images—which include sculpted, painted, and printed examples—the clouds, then, take on a certain *liturgical charge*, and consequently, I will refer to this particular genre of imagery as the genre of the “liturgical cloud.” I use this term to distinguish this type of cloud from those that came before it—such as the more “narrative” clouds seen everywhere in the tale-telling transformation tableaux of the seventh and eighth centuries at the Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟 near Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province—and that existed contemporaneously—for example, the clouds and mists omnipresent in Song landscape painting. Further, I have chosen this term as a means of insisting on the link that I identify between the emergence of this motif in the late Tang dynasty (618-907) and the concomitant rise of ritual practices—notably, the Water-Land Retreat—whose artworks make extensive use of such clouds and may, indeed, have spurred the empire-wide spread of the motif.

The ubiquity of the cloud motif, both liturgical and otherwise, conceals several important questions. Why, for example, did this shift in the popularity and usage of cloud motifs occur in the ninth century? How and why did the liturgical cloud come to be so widely employed in the Song, particularly in the context of the Water-Land Retreat? Do the later, ubiquitous, and rather systematized uses of the liturgical cloud represent the full range of its functions in earlier periods? To answer these questions, this chapter will trace the emergence of the liturgical cloud, as well as some of the more unusual uses to which it was put in the Song dynasty, before its use was systematized in later periods. However, in Chapter 2.1 I will begin with an examination of the liturgical cloud's systematized visual endpoint, for an overview of its ultimately stereotyped form may help us to define more clearly the contours of this genre. I then will examine some of the textual cues embedded in ritual manuals, such as those for the Water-Land Retreat, that engage in close dialogue with these pictorial depictions of clouds. Having established the visual and textual profile of the mature motif, in Chapter 2.2 I will step back in time to trace the development of the liturgical cloud in both image and text. Finally, in Chapter 2.3 I will conclude with some unexpected Song materials—some, reflections on clouds in general; others, unusual liturgical cloud imagery, all associated with the Water-Land Retreat—that reveal the remarkable functions that this seemingly simple motif came to fulfill. I will argue that these innovative images reveal that the motif of the cloud came to provide a locus for reflection on the shared mediational nature of both ritual and representation.

CHAPTER 2.1 | A Systematized Endpoint: The Clouds of Qinglong si and the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai*

Introduction

As was briefly discussed in Chapter 1.1 of this dissertation, throughout northern China—especially in Shanxi and Hebei Provinces—are scattered a great number of Yuan- (1279-1368), Ming- (1368-1644) and Qing-dynasty (1644-1911) temples whose halls are adorned with extensive mural-painted pantheons. Importantly, the deities depicted in these halls can be directly connected to the lists of deities summoned during performances of the “northern” liturgy for the Water-Land Retreat, known in full as the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* 天地冥陽水陸齋 (“Retreat of [All Beings] of Heaven and Earth, the Netherworld and This World, Water and Land”).² Among these temples, Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), located in Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, preserves the earliest such set of northern Water-Land murals (Figure 2.1).³ The four walls of its Middle Hall 腰殿, the construction of which was completed in the sixteenth year of the Zhiyuan 至元 era of the Yuan dynasty (1289) and the restoration of which was completed in the fourth year of the Yongle 永樂 era of the Ming dynasty (1406), are covered with a dizzying array of deities, though sadly, the murals are now rather deteriorated, many sections having fallen away during the intervening six centuries. The west wall, which is best preserved, speaks particularly well to the primary conceits underlying

² For the list of deities, see “Shuilu paixiang 水陸牌像,” in TDMY, “Tantu shi 壇圖式,” 16a-17b, and Appendix 1 of this dissertation.

³ For detailed iconographic and historical discussions of Qinglong si, see Dai Xiaoyun, 戴曉雲, *Fojiao shuiluhua yanjiu* 佛教水陸畫研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009), esp. 131; and Sun Bo 孫博, “Jishan Qinglong si bihua yanjiu 稷山青龍寺壁畫研究,” in *Shanxi siguan bihua xinzheng* 山西寺觀壁畫新證, edited by Li Song 李淞 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2011), 115-171. I thank Prof. Shih-shan Susan Huang for bringing the latter essay to my attention.

the composition—concepts which remained relevant to mural painters in the region throughout the Ming and Qing periods.

Manifesting Buddha-Bodies

Three large buddhas seated in half-*padma-āsana* atop lotus thrones supported by six-sided Sumeru pedestals dominate the upper register of this western wall. The central buddha wears white and green robes and an elaborate five-pointed gold crown. He holds his hands in a variant of the vajra-fist mudra. These attributes identify him as Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那佛, the Dharma Body 法身 (Sanskrit: *dharmakāya*) in the schema of the three bodies of the buddha 三身 (Sanskrit: *trikāya*), which is used to conceptualize the ways in which a buddha appears to beings of varying levels of spiritual advancement (Figure 2.2). Vairocana's body is surrounded by a white mandorla, outlined with a thick, unmodulated black ink line and rendered with a white, either calcium- or lead-based pigment, while his head is set against a similarly outlined halo of deep mineral green. To his left and right are the Reward Body 報身 (Sanskrit: *sambhogakāya*), known as Rocana 盧舍那佛, and the Manifestation Body 化身 (Sanskrit: *nirmāṇakāya*)—that is, Śākyamuni Buddha 釋迦牟尼佛, the historical Buddha—of the *trikāya* schema (Figure 2.3). Each wears a red outer robe, green inner robe, and white undergarments; and each is surrounded by a green mandorla and white halo rendered with the same pigments used for the equivalent adornments of Vairocana. Standing between each pair of buddha-bodies is a haloed monk, one depicted as a wizened old man, the other as a somewhat wild South or Central Asian figure with dark skin and heavy earrings.

Clouds swirl about and among the Three Buddha-Bodies. Particularly prominent are the cloud-heads that float directly above them each. Vairocana is crowned by a jeweled canopy seemingly held aloft by a bank of billowing white and green clouds; meanwhile, over the heads

of the other two buddha-bodies billow white and green clouds unadorned by jeweled canopies. These cumuloid masses are rendered using techniques that remained relatively constant throughout the history of the depiction of clouds in liturgical artworks. Thick, scalloped outlines of black ink are used to define the edges of the masses—which consist primarily of a white mineral pigment, presumably calcium- or lead-based—and to articulate the spiraling clumps of cloud-matter within. In the bank surmounting Vairocana, a certain sense of layered volume is given to the clouds by first brushing a black outline, following it with a thin band of reserved white ground, and then brushing a second black outline. The outer edges of some of the interior scalloped outlines are given a further suggestion of volume through the application of a light wash of green pigment. The scalloped outlines of the banks of clouds crowning the Reward and Manifestations Bodies are similarly rendered in spiraling patterns; however, the center of each spiral is then filled with a somewhat thicker overcoat of the same light green pigment. The effect is almost that of covering these white cloud banks with large green polka dots. This technique seems to have found particular favor among painters working in southern Shanxi during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties,⁴ as similar clouds can be found in the Yuan-period Daoist murals at the Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy) (Figure 2.4) and in the Ming- and

⁴ Over the course of the past twenty-five years, a number of essays in English have been published on southern Shanxi painting, especially that of the Zhu Haogu 朱好古 studio. See Nancy Steinhardt, “Zhu Haogu Reconsidered: A New Date for the ROM Painting and the Southern Shanxi Buddhist-Daoist Style,” *Artibus Asiae* 48, no. 1/2 (1987): 5-38; Anning Jing, “The Yuan Buddhist Mural of the Paradise of Bhaisajayaguru,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (1991): 147-166; Ka Bo Tsang, “Further Observations on the Yuan Wall Painter Zhu Haogu and the Relationship of the Chunyang Hall Wall Paintings to the ‘Maitreya Paradise’ at the ROM,” *Artibus Asiae* 52, no. 1/2 (1992): 94-118; and Michelle Baldwin, “Monumental Wall Paintings of the Assembly of the Buddha from Shanxi Province: Historiography, Iconography, Three Styles, and a New Chronology,” *Artibus Asiae* 53, no. 3/4 (1994): 241-267.

Qing-dynasty Buddhist murals at the Guangsheng shang si 廣勝上寺 (Upper Monastery of Vast Excellence) (Figure 2.5), among other temples.⁵

Two further types of clouds are visible in the areas immediately surrounding the Three Buddha-Bodies. Welling up behind the buddhas' thrones can be seen cumuloid masses of an intense ochre. Again, thick, scalloped, black lines, which tend to follow a spiraling pattern, are used to define these masses and the facets within. These clouds lack any sort of tapering band or "tail" that might convey a sense of motion; instead, they simply billow, surrounding, if not supporting, the deities and conveying a sense of the exalted, otherworldly realm that they occupy. Perhaps, too, they suggest the deities' manifesting before our very eyes.⁶

Meanwhile, above this bank of yellow clouds and filling all of the empty space behind the three buddhas are depicted very thin bands of what might be identified as bi-colored wisps of *qi* 氣. This bi-partite ethereal substance, consisting of both *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 aspects, suffuses all things in the cosmos; when condensed, it is, in fact, known as "cloud."⁷ Here, *yin* and *yang* *qi* are depicted as thin, horizontal bands that periodically curve and split into elaborate curlicues. The bands—green for *yang* and white for *yin*—are again delineated by relatively thick, unmodulated black ink outlines; they rest against a dark gray background. Their form and mode of depiction can be traced back to the Han dynasty (if not before), to both subterranean tomb

⁵ On Yongle gong, see Paul Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999); and Lennert Gesterkamp, *The Heavenly Court: Daoist Temple Painting in China, 1200-1400* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), esp. 76-97 and 241-253. On one of the halls of Guangsheng si, see Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual, and Theater* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2002).

⁶ On the representation of visualized, manifesting, and materializing deities, particularly during the Song and Yuan dynasties, see Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔, "Buddhist Paintings from the Song and the Yuan Dynasties: Visual Representations in the Paintings of Devotional Deities," *The International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* 4 (March 2011): 94-115.

⁷ This definition comes from the Han-dynasty (206BCE-220CE) apocryphon 緯書 *Chunqiu yuanming bao* 春秋元命苞, which specifies that "yin and yang collect to make clouds 陰陽聚為雲." Cited in TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 68.

murals (Figure 2.6) and other objects such as lacquer wares (Figure 2.7).⁸ The presence of these bands of *qi*, perhaps somewhat unexpected in a Buddhist context given their closer association with Daoist and other forms of indigenous Chinese thought, may simply serve to emphasize the otherworldly nature of the setting—a realm beyond (or at the beginning?) of the realm of form in which we dwell. However, the particular prominence given to these bands around Vairocana—the cosmic Dharma Body whose (in)corporeal form, according to many exegetes, encompasses the entire cosmos—may further emphasize this cosmic-creationist aspect of the deity. In him, to borrow Daoist terminology, *yin* and *yang qi* conjoin to produce the myriad things. The inextricable link between *qi* and clouds is also directly embodied in the material profile of this composition; for it is the same green and white pigments of the wisps of *qi* that are also used to render the cloud canopies crowning the Three Buddha-Bodies. *Qi* and clouds—these protean ethers of constantly changing degrees of visibility—are thus given a particularly prominent place within the art of the Water-Land Retreat, as we shall see in other paintings, as well.

Moving Clouds and Materializing Spirits

In the registers beneath this uppermost *qi*-formed band of buddhas, clouds—still omnipresent—take rather different forms and fulfill rather different functions. Immediately surrounding the buddhas, and hence essentially occupying their same register, are seated a number of bodhisattvas, now largely deteriorated. Only the bodhisattva Maitreya 彌勒菩薩, positioned immediately below and to the proper left of Śākyamuni, remains fully intact (Figure 2.8). Swirling around him and the unidentified bodhisattva to the upper right are banks of white

⁸ A similar observation can be found in Hida Romi 肥田路美, “Unkimon no shinka to igi 雲気文の進化と意義,” unpublished conference paper, “Meishushi zhong de Han Jin yu Tang Song zhuanzhe 美術史中的漢晉與唐宋轉折,” Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan, 2012, 4. I thank Prof. Hida for kindly providing me with a copy of her paper. For further discussion, see Inoue Masaru 井上豪, “Hiten ni tomonau ryūun no zuzōteki haikai 飛天に伴う流雲の図像的背景,” *Nihon shūkyō bunkashi kenkyū* 日本宗教文化史研究 11, no. 2 (November 2007): 154-158.

clouds rendered little differently from the ochre banks welling among the buddhas. However, in some passages, the distinctively scalloped edges of the cloud-forms are elongated to create cumuloid banks that taper into tails, which seem to emerge from places lower in the composition (Figure 2.9). The suggestion becomes one of movement more than billowing—as though the deities surrounded by these clouds are being propelled to assemble in front of the buddhas manifesting above.

This particularly seems to be the case where the white masses billow and flow among the figures to the lower left of Maitreya (Figure 2.10). Two young female attendants, a haloed small male child, and a slightly fearsome male banner-bearer surround a larger crowned and haloed deity who presses his palms together in a gesture of veneration. Although these figures lack an identificatory cartouche, given their costumes and given that they form a symmetrical pair with a group at left identified as “Indra and his Saintly Entourage 帝釋聖眾” (Figure 2.11), they can be confidently identified as “Brahma and his Saintly Entourage 梵天聖眾.” Summoned from far-distant heavens, these two deities and their followers have come, propelled by welling banks of clouds, to pay homage to the buddhas.

Dividing the entourages of Brahma and Indra is the figure of a haloed monk whose back is turned to the viewer (Figure 2.12). He bows before an altar table set below Vairocana’s throne. The monk, in a sense, serves as an avatar for the viewer-worshipper—a figure who presents a model of how one should approach these exalted buddhas. He thereby serves as a suture between the spaces of unenlightened beings, including both the representational space of the mundane spirits depicted in the mural and the real space of us viewer-worshippers, and the purely representational space of the buddhas’ realm above. The implications of this schema will be discussed in greater detail in the conclusion to Chapter 2.3. For now, suffice it to point out

that clouds fulfill a critical function in linking these different realms. The altar table is set with a candle and an offering of coral at left and right respectively, while an incense censer towers at center. From and around that censer billows a bank of slightly fungal cloud-heads, at once linking the altar to Vairocana's throne visually and creating a sense of separation between the realm of the buddhas and the registers below. Here, incense and clouds conjoin to construct a notion of the cloud as a device that simultaneously separates and sutures, a notion with which, as I will discuss in Chapter 2.3, Song-dynasty artisans played extensively.

Immediately surrounding Brahma, Indra, and their entourages is an array of celestial deities, including the Princes of the Sun 日宮天子眾 and Moon Palaces 月宮天子眾, identifiable both by cartouche and by the sun (a red disk) and moon (a white disk) emblems in their crowns (Figures 2.13 and 2.14). The deities contained in this register largely correspond to those deities summoned as part of the middle, or heavenly, class of the three main classes of beings included in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*; these are, in other words, non-Buddhist deities whose protection Buddhist worshippers seek at the same time as they attempt to convert them to the Buddha's path.⁹ In this composition, each deity is propelled by welling banks of brilliantly colored clouds—green in the case of the Prince of the Sun Palace; yellow in the case of the Prince of the Moon Palace—, the motion of which is again suggested by tapering cloud-tails rooted in the lower part of the composition. Indeed, throughout this mural, and in many other Water-Land-related works, individual groups of summoned deities are, in general, distinguished from other such groups by the color of the clouds that surround them. The clouds, in other words, take on both a narrative meaning (suggesting motion from one realm to another) and a compositional function (separating groups of deities). However, it seems that the specific color

⁹ See TDMY, fasc. 2, 6b-12a.

of the clouds associated with a particular group of deities is arbitrary. Instead, artisans seem to have simply chosen alternately among a set of three to five colors—here, for example, white, yellow, and green; or yellow, blue, red, and blackish-green in the case of the seventeenth-century murals of the Chuanfa zhengzong dian 傳法正宗殿 (Hall of the Transmission of the Dharma of the Orthodox School) at the Yong'an si 永安寺 (Monastery of Eternal Peace) in Hunyuan County 渾源縣, Shanxi Province (Figure 2.15). These generally evoke the auspicious “five colors 五色”—typically, red, blue, yellow, white, and black—that appear so frequently in the form of lights, clouds, or animal markings in accounts of auspicious portents throughout Chinese history, both Buddhist and non-.

Clouds and the Nature of Divinity

The lower register of the mural is populated with figures belonging both to the middle and lower classes of beings summoned during the ritual—figures ranging from astral gods and directional deities to demons whose beneficence is not always assured. The depictions of the deities themselves provide extensive and intriguing material for the study of the iconography of the Water-Land Retreat, but for our present purposes, it is most important to note that it is in this register that the mural’s clouds reach their height of dynamism. Multiple large banks of cumuloid masses well up beneath the deities in this register, the heads and tails of each mass given particularly clear, dramatic expression. Especially in the lower-right hand corner of the wall, the tails are attached to triple cloud-heads that seem to imitate the form of the *lingzhi* 靈芝 fungus, a particularly auspicious motif. The billowing forms of the cloud-masses that surround some groups of deities—notably, the Spirits of the Twelve Primes 十二元神眾 (Figure 2.16)—closely resemble the generic cloud-types that I enumerated above, being formed with thick, unmodulated, scalloped black outlines that taper into tails emerging from the lower reaches of

the tableau; however, the clouds surrounding other deities show an unexpected dynamism. Around the Dharma-Protecting Benevolent Spirits 護法善神, whose bodies are surrounded by flaming mandorlas rendered in brilliant mineral green, the clouds take on some of the electrical energy of the flame-forms (Figure 2.17). Rather than welling up from below, the tails that suggest the motion of these clouds originate above the deities, their sharp, incisor-like extremities contrasting sharply with the longer, more languid tails seen elsewhere in the mural. One is hard-pressed to differentiate between flame and cloud. To a certain degree, then, cloud-forms can be said to respond directly to the nature of the deity that they surround: these fearsome, though benevolent spirits, electrify the clouds that carry them, whereas other deities must remain content to be conveyed by far calmer forms.

The Symmetry of Assembly

One final point, briefly alluded to above, needs to be made about the structure of this tableau as a whole—namely, it is rigorously symmetrical. A vertical axis runs through the center of Vairocana's body, continues through the tall incense censer on the altar table below him, as well as through the worshipping monk whose back is turned to us, and ultimately ends in the cleft in the clouds between the left- and right-hand Dharma-Protecting Benevolent Spirits. The figures on both sides of this axis are, almost exclusively, rendered from a three-quarter frontal perspective facing that axis. In other words, the deities all seem to be converging toward it, arraying themselves almost as though they were assembling to pay court to the three awe-inspiring buddha-bodies above. Even though some figures are not facing this axis, their bodies move toward it while they engage in visual or verbal dialogue with others behind them. It is, quite simply, a cloud-bestrewn scene of assembly whose rigorous order thoroughly befits a highly structured ritual of universal assembly such as the Water-Land Retreat. As such, it is

close in compositional conceit to the images of the “audience with the origin 朝元” so common in Daoist painting and recently studied by Lennert Gesterkamp—images in which clouds similarly abound.¹⁰

Cross-Medium Consistency

The above descriptions direct our attention to several important points regarding clouds, their meanings, and their compositional roles in later Water-Land-related works. To summarize briefly, clouds first must be distinguished from *qi*, the ethereal dyadic vapors that condense to give them form. Formally, this differentiation is achieved through the use of a decidedly linear manner of rendering *qi* and the fuller, highly material (material both in the literal sense of making heavy use of pigment, and in the sense of taking large, almost tangible form) manner of rendering clouds. Further, clouds are defined by their use of thick, scalloped, spiraling outlines that delineate masses of intense color, typically chosen from among the five auspicious colors and typically rendered in heavy mineral pigments. As will be discussed in some detail later, clouds—celestial bodies—often are also distinguished from mists—terrestrial masses—, a differentiation that is achieved through the use of contrasting media—the intense colors of clouds placed in opposition to the monochromatic ink washes used to render mists.

Second, with regard to the semantic import of these cumuloid bodies, in the broadest, most generic sense, clouds serve simply to convey a sense of the otherworldliness or auspiciousness of a scene. Such clouds most frequently are found around the borders of a composition. Depicted without a sense of motion and with only a general sense of billowing, they suggest the notion of a deity’s manifestation, or, perhaps, of his appearing during visualization. These motionless, welling masses almost exclusively appear surrounding the

¹⁰ See Gesterkamp, *The Heavenly Court*.

buddhas and certain exalted bodhisattvas that are the recipients of offerings not only from the human ritual officiants but also from the other spirits summoned during the ritual. Surrounding these other spirits is a formally similar cloud that differs in only a single important way—namely, it is endowed with a tail. With this tail that gives these cumuloid bodies their all-important sense of motion, these clouds are able to serve more dynamically to convey spirits from one realm to the next; and depending on the deity that they carry, these clouds frequently adapt their formal features to reflect something of the deity's nature.

Finally, it perhaps goes without saying that these same vehicles of divine conveyance can also play a structural role within a composition, separating one group of related deities from the next. Each group, in other words, is given its own nebulous mount. Formally, semantically, and compositionally, the liturgical cloud thus simultaneously separates and sutures different realms, bringing the mundane and the supramundane into contact with one another, while ensuring that they remain provisionally separate.

These fundamental traits and functions remain remarkably constant throughout the Water-Land-related works of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, as can be seen not only in mural paintings, but also in hanging scrolls and prints, and even stone carvings. For example, the best-known and most complete set of Water-Land hanging scrolls, which were discovered at Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, in 1953, and which date to the early sixteenth century, largely make use of the same conventions¹¹; however, as is more typical of portable paintings on silk, they employ organic

¹¹ For a complete set of reproductions of the Baoning si scrolls, see *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫, edited by Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1985). The scrolls have been the subject of a number of articles and theses since first being published in 1985. For the most recent of these studies, see Chen Junji 陳俊吉, "Shanxi Baoning si shuilu daochang huihua yanjiu 山西寶寧寺水陸道場繪畫研究," unpublished M.A. thesis, Guoli Taiwan yishu daxue, 2009.

vegetal colors and monochrome ink rather than heavy mineral colors to render the clouds. Within the set, welling banks of clouds, which are depicted by means of thin, unmodulated ink outlines that delineate the colored cumuloid tufts, surround the seated buddhas and bodhisattvas who are the principal objects of veneration (Figure 2.18), while flowing, long-tailed, spiraling bands convey the lesser spirits (Figure 2.19). Some variation in the manner of depicting both the clouds and the figures suggests that multiple genres of liturgical painting came to be included within what we now know as sets of “Water-Land paintings.”¹² Other Ming-dynasty sets of Water-Land hanging scrolls—for example, the several seventeenth-century works from a no-longer complete set collected by Paul Pelliot and preserved in the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet in Paris—maintain the use of heavy mineral color for cloud-forms, combining it with intense monochrome inkwork in some billowing masses (Figure 2.21). Meanwhile, a third type of set—such as the incomplete imperially sponsored corpus dated to the fifth year of the Jingtai era 景泰 of the Ming dynasty (1454) and divided among the collections of the Musée Guimet, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Cleveland Museum of Art—relies primarily on monochrome clouds (Figure 2.22).¹³

¹² Most notably, the arhats included in the set are depicted against well-wrought landscapes in rather narrativized settings that contrast sharply with the iconic, cloud-filled compositions used in depictions of other deities (Figure 2.20). Similarly, the ghosts of people who have suffered various kinds of violent deaths 橫死 are depicted in highly narrativized settings. This may suggest that a seemingly unified “set” of Water-Land paintings could actually have been composed of works from initially independent sets, which in turn implies that “sets” of Water-Land painting were not as standardized as one might assume. This then lends further credence to the notion that the pantheon of deities summoned during a performance of the ritual could, indeed, be reshaped according to the desires of—or even the icons possessed by—the patron.

¹³ Several paintings from these sets have been discussed in Caroline Gyss-Vermande, “Demons et merveilles: vision de la nature dans une peinture liturgique du XVe siècle,” *Arts asiatiques* 43 (1988): 106-122; and idem, “Les Messagers divins et leur iconographie,” *Arts asiatiques* 46 (1991): 96-110. A number have also been reproduced and introduced in *La Voie du Tao: un autre chemin de l'être*, edited by Catherine Delacour (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, Musée Guimet, 2010); and Stephen Little et al., *Taoism and the Arts of China* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago in association with University of California Press, 2000).

Meanwhile, the so-called *Shuilu daochang shengui tuxiang* 水陸道場神鬼圖像 (*Images of the Spirits of the Water-Land Altar*)—a set of one hundred fifty monochrome woodblock prints depicting the myriad deities summoned during the Water-Land Retreat that dates to the Chenghua 成化 era (1465-1487) of the Ming dynasty—makes use of the very same conventions, though rendered in purely linear form.¹⁴ In the print depicting the five directional buddhas 五方如來, for example, motionless masses rendered with thin, scalloped, spiraling lines suggest the manifestation of these objects of veneration (Figure 2.23). These clouds billow ever larger, creating a pyramidal form around the buddhas, while in the background, paired horizontal bands—presumably of *qi*—merge with the cloud-heads as though condensing into visible form. Lesser spirits, on the other hand, are shown surrounded by gently swirling lines that flow diagonally from one upper corner of the image to the opposite lower corner, suggesting the descent of the spirits into the ritual space (Figure 1.14). In these prints—as was true in the murals at Qinglong si, and as is true in all of the sets of hanging scrolls, as well—buddhas and bodhisattvas are depicted frontally (and hence statically), while the lesser, descending spirits, are depicted from a three-quarter angle and are clearly moving toward one edge of the panel. Given that the prints, like many of the sets of hanging scrolls, are all labeled with a number and the character for either “left 左” or “right 右,” we can know that these lesser deities were meant to be

¹⁴ A nearly complete set of these prints, whose title was assigned by modern scholars, is now preserved in the National Library in Beijing. See the complete set of reproductions in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan er bian* 中國古代版畫叢刊二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), vol. 2, n.p. A partial, and partially hand-colored, set is held by Kōdate Naomi 高逵奈緒美 in Japan. See the several reproductions and introduction to these works in catalogue entry #117 in *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波：日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 180 and 311-312. For a more complete discussion, see Takasu Jun 鷹巣純, “Kōdate Naomi-shi zō ‘Jūō jigoku zu’ (kadaï) to suiriku-ga 高逵奈緒美氏蔵「十王地獄図」(仮題)と水陸画,” *Etoki kenkyū* 絵解き研究 13 (1997): 1-26.

arrayed symmetrically around the frontally depicted iconic buddhas and bodhisattvas, which would have been placed at the center of the ritual space.¹⁵

A sixteenth-century cave shrine, whose walls are carved with cloud-borne spirits depicted in a panel-like format formally similar to the printed pages of the *Shuilu daochang shengui tuxiang*, preserves something akin to a three-dimensional installation of those prints (Figure 2.24).¹⁶ In Cave 5, commonly known as the “Shuilu dian 水陸殿” (“Water-Land Hall”), of Baoyan si 寶巖寺 (Treasure Cliff Monastery), also known as Jindeng si 金燈寺 (Golden Lamp Monastery) near Pingshun County 平順縣, Shanxi, these low-relief panels of descending deities assemble around three monumental, fully round sculptures of the *trikāya* (which serve as the pillar-like central icons of the cave) and further relief carvings of various buddhas that occupy the center of the cave’s rear wall. In a somewhat remarkable act of cross-medium appropriation, ephemeral prints gain lithic form.¹⁷

In other words, there exists remarkable formal, compositional, and semantic consistency among the depictions of clouds in the many sets of Water-Land-related works produced in China from the Yuan to Qing dynasties, regardless of medium. From a superficial, largely formal and iconographical perspective, the import of the motif is quite clear. However, if we read these

¹⁵ A detailed iconographic study might be undertaken by comparing the ordering of the deities depicted in the prints and hanging scrolls to the ordering of the lists of deities recorded in TDMY, “Tantu shi,” 16a-17b. See, for example, Dai, 125-157.

¹⁶ See Yang Lie 楊烈, “Baoyan si Ming dai shiku 寶巖寺明代石窟,” *Wenwu* 文物 134 (December 1961): 42-48.

¹⁷ A similar instance of cross-medium appropriation can be observed among the Song-dynasty carvings of Feilai feng 飛來峰 (Flown-in Peak), near Hangzhou 杭州, Zhejiang Province. There, a low-relief carving of Vairocana (identified by inscription as Rocana), Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra, dated to 1022 (Figure 2.25), seems to closely imitate the formal characteristics of early Northern Song prints of similar subjects from the Jiangnan 江南 region, such as those installed in the sculpture of Śākyamuni brought to Japan from China in 987 by the pilgrim-monk Chōnen 裔然 (Figure 2.26). On Feilai feng, see Chang Qing, “Feilaifeng and the Flowering of Chinese Buddhist Sculpture from the Tenth to the Fourteenth Centuries,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 2005.

images in conjunction with the ritual manual that served as the primary impetus for the production of these images, the world evoked by these images—a world that existed more vividly in the minds of the officiants performing the ritual than was ever depicted in pictorial or material form in this period—becomes all the clearer. Close attention to the relationship between these later texts and images will, I hope, make us more sensitive to the unexpected discoveries that can be made regarding the innovative uses of clouds in earlier Song works.

Clouds in Ritual

Not surprisingly, cloud imagery abounds in Water-Land liturgical manuals of all of the regional traditions discussed in Part 1 of this dissertation. The northern tradition of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, which, as Dai Xiaoyun 戴曉雲 and others have shown in their studies over the past five years, served as the textual basis for both the performance of the ritual and the production of images in northern China and Korea from the Yuan through the Qing, is no exception.¹⁸ Clouds greet us from the very moment we open this manual that likely guided the creation of the Qinglong si murals. The frontispiece illustration of the first fascicle of the Princeton University copy of the manual is filled with cumulous bodies—billowing as deities manifest, flowing as spirits ascend and descend, and imbuing the page with a general sense of auspiciousness (Figure 2.27).¹⁹ The illustration, in other words, is a fitting opening to a text in which clouds abound. More importantly, it provides a visual cue alerting us viewer-worshippers to abandon our mundane minds so that we may embrace the fantastic textual imagery that will follow.

¹⁸ Dai, *Fojiao shuilu hua yanjiu*.

¹⁹ TDMY, fasc. 1, n.p. Similar such frontispieces are found in many of the Chinese and Korean copies of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* that I have examined.

Fragrant Clouds

The primary locus of cloud imagery throughout the text lies in the myriad *gāthās* 偈 that accompany the offering of incense throughout the performance of the ritual. The first such poem—recited immediately before the “Fen xiang da tuoluoni 焚香大陀羅尼” (“Great *Dhāraṇī* of Burning Incense”) used in summoning the arhat Piṇḍola 賓頭盧 to descend 降臨²⁰ to the ritual site to observe the sincerity with which the ritual is performed 鑒察虔誠之心—provides a model for all subsequent such verses. It goes:

Reaching both saints and commoners, its name touches faith;
propitious and auspicious, it is called “incense.”
Its fragrant cloud swirls about, filling the empty void,
making offerings to all the saints and sages of this dharma realm.

通聖通凡名達信 為祥為瑞號名香
香雲繚繞滿虛空 法界聖賢皆供養。²¹

The affinities between incense and clouds are all clearly laid out in these couplets. On the one hand, the passage points to the obvious visual similarity between incense and clouds; it takes little imagination to see the wisps of incense smoke burning during a ritual performance as metonyms of the grander clouds, both literal and metaphorical, that abound in Buddhist literature—the cloud of the Buddha’s benevolence, for example, which is described in the *Lotus Sutra* 妙法蓮華經²²; the cloud of the dharma, which canopies all the worlds of the ten directions; or, as the manual itself evokes, the cloud of the “vast vow 廣大願雲” to save all sentient

²⁰ See TDMY, fasc. 1, 9b and 10b.

²¹ TDMY, fasc. 1, 9a.

²² See Chapter 2.2.

beings.²³ On the other hand, the passage evokes the long-standing Chinese Buddhist, and pre-Buddhist, notion that incense—and smoke more generally—can serve as a medium of communication between the realms of humans and spirits. Indeed, burning—not only of incense, but also of texts (for example, the statements 疏 composed by the patron of a particular performance of a rite), paper money 紙錢, etc.—is used throughout the performance of the ritual as a means of transforming 化 mundane material goods into objects usable by spirits, and as a means of conveying those now saintly goods to their supramundane users.²⁴ Clouds, too, floating at the boundaries of these realms, might be said to serve a similar connective, if not necessarily communicative, function.

Further, incense and clouds are specifically described as coming together, almost *qi*-like, to form canopies that shroud saints; thus, a direct textual counterpart exists for the first type of cumuloid depiction that we identified in the Qinglong si murals. For example, in a homily on incense recited as part of the offering performed when opening the ritual space in front of the principal icons to be venerated (“Sheng qian kaiqi yi 聖前開啟儀”), incense is described as

now raising auspicious ethers [*qi*] to create a platform;
now collecting propitious clouds to make a canopy.

或騰瑞氣以為臺 或聚祥雲而作盖²⁵

The architecture of the saints is, quite literally, constructed of ethers; these exalted beings live among fragrant clouds.²⁶ Clouds, ethers, canopies, and platforms are indissociable. The

²³ TDMY, fasc. 2, 3b: “The perseverance of the cloud of the vast vow never ends; the fragrance of the boundless sea of enlightenment is impossible to exhaust 廣大願雲恒不盡，汪洋覺海香難窮。”

²⁴ For further discussion, see Ono Kayo 小野佳代, “Chugoku oyobi Nihon ni okeru egōro no yōhō—zuzō kaishaku he no kanōsei 中国および日本における柄香炉の用法—図像解釈への可能性,” *Nara bijutsu kenkyū* 奈良美術研究 3 (2005): 131-159.

²⁵ TDMY, fasc. 1, 22b.

structures in which these saints reside during the performance of the ritual are as transient and as ethereal as the ritual performance, and the Dharma Body, themselves.

Another homily on incense offering, which repeats these same general images, nevertheless opens the motifs in intriguing ways, pointing both to classical literary precedents and to fundamental concepts in Buddhist philosophy. This short discourse eulogizes:

[Incense smoke] resembles a cloud but does not have the truth of cloud; it is like mist but does not have the substance of mist. Now it gathers, joining to form a flower canopy; now it disperses, fluttering to create empty flowers.

似雲而非雲之真，如霧而非霧之寔。或聚而結為花蓋，或散而飄作空花。²⁷

The first pair of phrases in this passage evokes the phrasing of a description of auspicious cloud portents in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (ca. 145-86 BCE) *Shi ji* 史記 (*Records of the Grand Historian*), the *locus classicus* of many later descriptions of propitious meteorological signs. Sima Qian creates a rather vivid, if nebulous, definition of such extraordinary vapors. He writes:

Like smoke, but not smoke; like clouds, but not clouds; dark and billowing, chilly and swirling: these are what are called “auspicious clouds (*qingyun*).” “Auspicious clouds” are ethers (*qi*) of joy.

若煙非煙，若雲非雲，郁郁紛紛，蕭索輪囷，是謂卿雲。卿雲喜氣也。²⁸

²⁶ This imagery of nebulous architecture recurs throughout the text with subtle variation. The incense offering that opens that second fascicle of the manual, for example, changes the wording ever so slightly to speak of “joining the propitious clouds to make a canopy; congealing the auspicious ethers to create a platform 結祥雲而作蓋，凝瑞氣以為臺。” See TDMY, fasc. 2, 1a.

²⁷ TDMY, fasc. 1, 37a.

²⁸ Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145-86BCE), *Shi ji* 史記 (reprinted as *Xinjiao ben Shiji sanjia zhu bing fubian erzhong* 新校本史記三家注並附編二種), annotated by Pei Yin 裴駟 (act. mid fifth century) et al., fasc. 27 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981), vol. 2, 1339; HJDZ edition. This definition is given an interesting emendation in the *Jin shu* 晉書, which asserts that “these joyous ethers are a response to great peace 此喜氣也，太平之應。” See *Jin shu* 晉書 (reprinted as *Xinjiao ben Jin shu bing fubian liuzhong* 新校本晉書並附編六種), compiled by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡, annotated by Yang Jialuo 楊家駱, fasc. 12 (Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980), vol. 1, 329-330; HJDZ edition. Cited in Inoue, 160.

This simple passage was repeated countless times in the centuries following the composition of the *Shi ji*, particularly in memorials (*biao* 表 or *zhuang* 狀) written whenever a potential portent was observed by an official.²⁹ At the same time, however, this passage in the Water-Land manual introduces the terms “truth 真” and “substance 寔 • 實,” and thereby seems to pose incense—and by extension, clouds—as a paradigmatic image of the Buddhist concept of non-duality 不二. The liminality of auspicious clouds—their material “neither-nor-ness,” their position at the boundaries of different realms, “descending, encircling the Netherworld; ascending, pervading Brahma’s Heaven 下周陰界之中，上徹梵天之際，”³⁰ “penetrating the azure sky 通碧漢, ... permeating the Yellow Springs 透黃泉”³¹—make them an ideal figure for this concept that speaks of the essential nature of being as one of simultaneity, of simultaneously being something and nothing, of being substantial yet empty. Few substances could better picture this than incense and clouds, which take visual form yet remain intangible. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that Buddhist exegetes devoted so much energy to poetic descriptions of such substances.

²⁹ For a Song-dynasty example, see the entry on the “Thirty-second year of the Shaoxing era 紹興三十二年,” in *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿, compiled by Xu Songji 徐松輯 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, et al., 2008), Ruiyi 瑞異, fasc. 1, “Xiangrui zalu 祥瑞雜錄”; HJDZ edition: “Continuing to the tenth day of the sixth month, a five-colored cloud was seen to the south of the prefectural seat [of Langzhou 閬州, in present-day Sichuan Province] to the west of Mt. Jinping. It was like smoke, but it was not smoke; it was like mist, but it was not mist. It floated in the void reflecting sunlight from early to late afternoon 繼於六月初十日有五色雲見於州城之南，錦屏山之西，若煙非煙，若霧非霧，浮空映日，自未及申。”

³⁰ TDMY, fasc. 2, 39b.

³¹ Ibid.: “Spiraling, the propitious clouds penetrate the azure sky; conjoining, the auspicious ethers permeate the Yellow Springs 遶遶祥雲通碧漢，氤氲瑞縹透黃泉。”

Nebulous Portents

The specific association of clouds with auspiciousness—particularly the propitious conditions under which deities may descend into the ritual space—becomes the focus of other passages in the manual, especially homilies and verses intoned when summoning particular deities. For example, a *gāthā* recited immediately before invoking the local wind and rain deities 當境風伯雨師, creates a highly imagistic account of the wondrousness of the ritual site and the blessings bestowed by these deities. The passage recounts:

 Their subtle motions and divine penetrations innumerable,
 we pray that they will bestow joy and manifest great brilliance.
The thousand mountains collect the mists, halting the thunderous rain;
 a thousand *li* are adorned with clouds, bestowing auspicious propitiousness.
The brilliant sun hangs eternally, dispelling the gloom;
 a fresh breeze lightly spreads, ceasing to thunder about.
Illuminating Heaven and Earth, increasing its glory,
 all benefit the perfected *yang* and this great ritual site.

妙運神通不可量	願垂歡喜顯威光
千山歛霧停雷雨	萬里妝雲降瑞祥
杲日長懸除暗暘	清風微布止颼颼
晴明天地增榮曜	咸助真陽大道場。 ³²

Although focused on the symbolic associations of meteorological phenomena, the passage nevertheless includes a key term for the study of liturgical clouds—namely, “descend 降” (here used transitively to mean “to [cause to] descend” or, by extension, “to bestow”). The passage suggests that clouds not only signify auspiciousness, but also they, in effect, cause it to descend from the celestial realm into the human realm. They are, then, carriers—media—of the propitious. And these auspicious portents serve a particular function, articulated later in the invocation of the wind and rain deities:

Rising clouds and spreading rain nourish the farmers’ crops;

³² TDMY, fasc. 1, 13b-14a.

manifesting auspiciousness and presenting propitiousness aids the Buddha's light.

興雲布雨滋農稼 現瑞呈祥助佛光。³³

In other words, clouds play a nourishing role both physically and metaphorically—on the one hand, aiding in crop production, and on the other, propagating the Buddha's dharma. In a sense, the image of the cloud is employed here to speak to the paired interests of the state and of the Buddhist religion. As we saw in Part 1 of this dissertation, these paired interests have always been embedded in the Water-Land Retreat and are, in fact, typical of most Buddhist ritual practices that emerged in the late-Tang through Song periods.

Cumulous Paradises, Nebulous Hells

Of greatest relevance to the study of visual manifestations of the liturgical cloud, however, are the usages of the motif of these billowing bodies in two other locations within the manual—namely, in the descriptions of heavenly realms and in the descriptions of travel between the heavens, hells, and our human world. On the one hand, clouds seem to be an indispensable element in any description of the realms inhabited by saintly beings, including the heavens of celestial and astral deities and the Pure Lands 淨土 of various buddhas. At the end of the manual, as the various saintly beings are sent to return to their original dwelling places, their homes are described as follows:

Golden lotuses carrying their feet, they go back to their Heavenly Palaces; with the Seven Treasures adorning their bodies, they return to their Pure Lands. Auspicious clouds swirl about; heavenly men play heavenly music to welcome them. Propitious ethers abound; heavenly maidens present heavenly flowers to receive them. Hence, the saints and sages of the *dharmadhātu* return to their Treasured Realm, and the saintly masses of the Netherworld go back to the Dark Capital.

金蓮捧足，迴赴天宮。七寶嚴身，還歸淨土。祥雲遶遶，天男動天樂來迎。瑞氣氛氛，天女獻天花接引。是以法界聖賢，還歸寶界。陰司聖眾，再返幽都。³⁴

³³ TDMY, fasc. 1, 14b.

Such imagery draws on a long tradition of textual depictions of Buddhist Pure Lands and Daoist realms of immortals, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2.

This cloud- and light-filled imagery is developed to particularly striking effect in homilies on a specific *physical* piece of ritual apparatus—namely, the “Golden Bridge 金橋,” a long roll of pure cloth visualized as a glorious path. It is along this path that the saints are visualized to parade into the ritual hall, and mundane beings are seen to tread across it when they come to pay homage to the saints after being ritually bathed. Although unexceptional in external visual appearance, this piece of cloth dazzles the mind’s eye when described by the ritual officiant:

Red clouds surround; purple mists swirl. The Seven Rarities alternately adorn the balustrade; the Eight Treasures gather to form the path. The banks are arrayed with jade pillars; the base is spread with golden sand. Tinkling, immortal music fills the void; intensely fragrant, heavenly flowers fill the path. Line after line of banners [are arrayed], and row after row of canopies. Heavenly boys and immortal maidens welcome in front; dragon flutes and phoenix whistles follow behind. This path is a golden bridge built high and exceptionally, a single road penetrating through the Buddha’s realm. When the treasure canopies welcome, the auspicious ethers rise; where the banners guide, a fragrant wind blows.

盖聞紅雲繚繞，紫霧盤旋。七珎間飾欄杆，八寶攢成屈道。岸排玉柱，底布金沙。喧喧而仙樂盈空，馥馥而天花滿路。旌幢隊隊，幡盖行行。天男仙女以前迎，龍管鳳簫而後從。所以道金橋高建有殊功，一路玄通佛界中。寶盖迎時騰瑞氣，幢幡引處動香風。³⁵

Here, the ritualist opens for us a cloudy realm of exceptional visual, aural, and olfactory dynamism, a fitting textual counterpart to the fantastic vision of the Buddha’s realm depicted in the upper reaches of the mural of Qinglong si. Interestingly, colors come to matter in this description: it is clouds specifically of red and purple that signify auspiciousness; it is only a

³⁴ TDMY, fasc. 3, 44a.

³⁵ TDYM, fasc. 2, 34a.

golden path that is fit for the treading of saints. And in fact, it is reds and purples that are most commonly seen to color the clouds on which deities tread in early Water-Land-related paintings.³⁶

A related piece of ritual apparatus—the “Black Path 黑道,” another physical piece of cloth visualized as a path that transports mundane, even ghostly, beings into the ritual space so that they may be purified—is also imagined in decidedly cumuloid terms. Not surprisingly, here, the colors are far more somber. The description tells us:

The Black Path, cloud adorned, leaves behind the passes and paths of the Nine Springs. The white *urna*, light manifesting, guides across the bridges and fords of Great Crossing. Despite its form so dark, it knows of taking refuge; and its spirits so gloomy still gain form. We pray that the saintly masses of the gloom and darkness, the true souls of the Netherworld, will divide among carriages but avoid the roads, as clouds rush in the direction of the invitation. Unite the banners and join the flags, as light hurries to the positions of invocation. Come from this road; return on this path. If it were not for the empowerment of esoteric spells, we would fear that the dirty world would pollute.

黑道雲妝，分別九泉之閔路。白毫光現，引超大度之橋津。形杳杳以知歸，神冥冥而得狀。唯願幽冥聖眾，陰府真靈。分車僻路，雲趨所請之方。並幟聯幟，光赴召臨之位。來從此路，去返茲程。若非密咒以加持，由恐塵寰而穢汙。³⁷

The oppositional color scheme is clear: black clouds serve as metonyms for the Netherworld of ghosts, demons, and Hell beings; the white light of the Buddha signifies the possibility of salvation. Unsurprisingly, black clouds had always been associated with ominous events in Chinese literature and divination practices.³⁸ What else, then, might better serve as the meteorological backdrop for depictions of the depths of the Netherworld?

³⁶ For further discussion of such early paintings, see Chapter 2.2.

³⁷ TDMY, fasc. 2, 39a.

³⁸ I use the term “ominous” quite loosely. It was in a black cloud, after all, that Vaiśravaṇa 毘沙門天, the Heavenly King of the North 北方天王, appeared when he defeated the armies of the five states threatening the Tang garrison at Anxi in 742. See *Pishamen yigui* 毘沙門儀軌, translated by Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (705-774) (attrib.), in T21, no. 1249, 228b-c. Black clouds are, of course, associated with heavy rain, as well—though rain always brings with it the possibility of flooding.

Cloudy Conveyance

Several of the literary devices employed in these passages on the various paths by which spirits are assembled in the ritual space—in particular, the usage of colors and the trope of coming and going—are brought together in a homily at the very end of the manual that serves as a useful segue into a discussion of the role of clouds as a means of divine conveyance, both as paths and as vehicles. In this late passage, recited when the now-purified and -Buddhicized mundane spirits are sent to be reborn in the Pure Land, it is said that

as for the deceased souls, in the place whence they came, black clouds glowered; at the time when they left, purple mists hazed. In the past, they resided in the land of obstruction; now, they have entered the realm of leisure. Heavenly maidens scatter flowers; the spirits of the void play music. Leisurely do they return; carefree do they go.

伏以亡靈，來處黑雲靄靄，去時紫霧朦朧。昔居煩惱之鄉，今入逍遙之界。天女散花，空神奏樂。逍遙而歸，自在而往。³⁹

Although clouds are not specifically described as conveying the spirits, a closer association than we have yet seen is established between the motion of the spirits and the clouds—and especially the precise color of the clouds seen at the time of the spirits' coming and going. The gloom of the Netherworld very clearly has been converted into the brilliant reds and purples of the heavens, just as the spirits themselves have been converted from unenlightened Hell-dwellers into soon-to-be-enlightened residents of the Pure Land.

But the image of clouds as the path tread by these spirits becomes even more explicit elsewhere in the manual. A prayer made when summoning the Bodhisattva King of the Heavenly Storehouse 天藏王菩薩, for example, asks him to “open the cloudy road [and] lead the heavenly immortals 豁開雲路，導引天仙。”⁴⁰ In a nearby passage describing some of the

³⁹ TDMY, fasc. 3, 41b.

⁴⁰ TDMY, fasc. 2, 9a.

beings led into the ritual site by this bodhisattva, it is said that “ministers pace the red glow and purple mists 臣步紅霞紫霧” while “kings mount jade chariots and gold carts 王乘玉輦金車.”⁴¹

Further, some of the beings that the bodhisattva guides are asked to

take leave temporarily of the Water Realm, and descend to this dusty world. The carriage of the brilliant lord rushes as the flags of the sun and moon open; the cart of the sage minister approaches as the road of clouds and rosy glow surrounds. The myriad officials and many dukes approach.

唯願暫辭水府，畧降塵寰。明君駕動而日月旗開，賢宰車臨而雲霞路擁。百司僚宰，躬侯來臨。⁴²

Indra, another celestial deity whom we saw in the Qinglong si murals, meanwhile, “assists the Tathāgata’s dharma, with carriage in front, and aids the World-Honored One’s cloud, with cart following behind 佐如來法駕當前，輔世尊雲車從後.”⁴³ In all of these passages, cloud, path, and carriage become almost one, though they remain, provisionally, separate. These textual clouds exist, in a sense, like those pictorial clouds relegated to the margins of the murals we examined earlier: they imbue the scene with a sense of celestial auspiciousness and, at times, support particular deities; but they have yet to be allowed to serve specifically as vehicles of divine conveyance.

Nevertheless, elsewhere, clouds do, in fact, become directly identified as such saintly vehicles. One prayer made to the saints summoned to the ritual site, for example, goes:

We pray that the saintly masses of the Three Treasures and the spirits of Heaven and Earth will mount clouds and drive mists to come in orderly array, pacing the moon and following the incense [or fragrance] to arrive with dignity.

唯願三寶聖眾，天地神祇。乘雲駕霧簇簇而來，步月尋香徐徐而至。⁴⁴

⁴¹ TDMY, fasc. 2, 13b.

⁴² TDMY, fasc. 2, 16b.

⁴³ TDMY, fasc. 2, 10a.

⁴⁴ TDMY, fasc. 1, 36b.

Like the electrified clouds surrounding the Benevolent Dharma-Protecting Spirits depicted at Qinglong si, these rushing cumuloid bodies that connect one world with the next here come under the direct control of the deities that they convey. Importantly, too, olfactory offerings, visualization, and the materialization of the spirits within the ritual space all come to be intimately linked. All senses are activated in order to ensure that the deities really do make it to the ritual.

This discussion of clouds as vehicles of divine conveyance and, in particular, of the ability of clouds to carry spirits anywhere, is developed most extensively in the homily on the Four Tally-Bearing Messengers 四直持符使者, divine messengers invoked at the beginning of the ritual to carry memorials from the officiants throughout the cosmos to request the descent of all beings to the site of the performance of the liturgy. The manual tells us that these four deities

carry the talismanic texts of Heaven above and serve as messengers of the human realm. Their coming is with dragons rushing and rain galloping; their going is with lightning surging and clouds bounding. In a moment, they circle from the Earthly Offices to the Heavenly Bureaux; in an instant, they go back and forth from the Dragon Palace to the City of Ghosts. Ordering the clouds, they bear treasure blades that shine. Enchantingly dividing the jade colors, they drive the auspicious ethers that haze. Reporting good and evil to their superiors, they censure the sincere prayers.

執天上之符文，作人間之捷使。其來也，龍行雨駛。其去也，電激雲奔。地府天曹，回旋頃刻。龍宮鬼城，往返須臾。整頓霓裳，背寶刀而晃昱。媚分玉彩，駕瑞氣而氛氲。奏善惡於所司，剋應期於謹願。⁴⁵

Clouds, in other words, take these deities everywhere, from the heights of Heaven to the lowest reaches of the Netherworld. Like chariots, clouds can be driven; like paths, they can be treaded. Ultimately, no matter whether they serve as roads or as carriages, these supramundane cumuloid

⁴⁵ TDMY, fasc. 1, 29b-30a.

bodies allow saints and sages, spirits and ghosts, to, as the common Chinese figurative expression goes, “assemble like clouds 雲集 • 雲來集).”⁴⁶

Conclusion

Thus, throughout this text, clouds serve primarily to convey a sense of the auspicious grandeur of this cosmic assembly of spirits and, in a more physical sense, to convey those same spirits from one realm to the next. They accord, in other words, quite closely with the painted images that we examined earlier in the chapter.⁴⁷ The above survey of cloud imagery in the *Tiandi mingyang shuili yiwén* should make very clear the close correspondence between liturgical artwork and ritual text, not only in terms of the deities included in them but also in terms of the imagery employed in both. Text—constantly intoned throughout the performance of the rite—and image—displayed throughout the ritual and, in the case of murals, displayed in perpetuity—work together to create an environment, both physical and mental, that may make

⁴⁶ This phrase, which seems to appear first in the Han dynasty, is used surprisingly infrequently in this manual; in other Water-Land manuals, it is used almost to excess. Here, the only example I have found reads: “Today I follow the teachings and summon [the spirits], praying that the myriad saintly masses will come to assemble like clouds 我今依教鈎召請，願諸聖眾雲來集.” See TDMY, fasc. 1, 47b.

⁴⁷ We should also note that clouds periodically appear in somewhat more surprising places—for example, in iconographic descriptions of the clothing worn by particular deities, particularly those of a Daoist or vernacular character. The Earth God of the Monastery 伽藍土地 is described as “wearing a cap of raven clouds, with a head resembling snow; wearing robes of white silk, with a body like frost 帽戴烏雲頭似雪，袍披白練體如霜.” See TDMY, fasc. 1, 17a. Indeed, if we were to look closely at depictions of deities associated with all of the major Chinese religions, we would find that the cloud motif is commonly found adorning their robes, presumably signifying their status as supramundane beings. Elsewhere, a surprise is to be found in the rather negative characterization of cloud-like mist. In a homily in praise of repentance, which tells us that the practice can eliminate

the heavy sins of the Ten Evils and Five Crimes, like the sun vanquishes light frost; and [can remove] the deep worries of the Three Destinies and Eight Circumstances, like the wind dispelling thin mist. Obstruction by self and non-self, causes and effects—these it can extinguish without remainder; and it can carry the mundane into the [ranks of the] saintly. Indeed, in this, nothing exceeds repentance.

十惡五逆之重罪，如日敗於輕霜。三塗八難之深尤，但風祛於薄霧。自障他障，因緣果緣。可以散滅無餘，可以超凡入聖。然而無越於懺悔者耳。

See TDMY, fasc. 3, 30a. Mist here is identified as obstructive; whereas clouds cover us with beneficence, mist obscures with hindrances and must be cleared through repentance. This contrastive vision of seemingly similar meteorological phenomena may do much to help us understand why clouds are rather insistently rendered in bright pigments, while mists are exclusively depicted with watery ink wash in Water-Land-related paintings.

the worshipper ever more able to imaginatively embrace the fantastic feats of transformation performed in any ritual. These visual and textual images create an essential liturgical scenography for the worshippers' successful engagement with and participation in the ritual. The imagery is, of course, highly repetitive: almost every offering of incense, for example, involves an invocation of cloud-filled imagery; while any description of the heavens or evocation of the descent of celestial beings involves a perfunctory nod to the cumuloid masses that float at the heart of my discussion. But it is this repetition that may ultimately prove most important in successfully delineating the space and time of ritual as separate from the space and time of daily life.

CHAPTER 2.2 | Stepping Backward: A History of the Liturgical Cloud

Introduction

The above analysis has demonstrated the close affinity between the uses, meanings, and general visual imagination of clouds in later Water-Land liturgical paintings and texts. Simply put, clouds serve to imbue a scene with a sense of auspiciousness, to separate and suture the realms of different beings, to transport those beings from one realm to the next, and to structure vast pictorial compositions filled with differing groups of deities. These conventions remained highly stable from the Yuan dynasty onward; questions remain, however, about the history of the liturgical cloud in eras prior to its later systematization. Most pressing are the issues of when, where, why, and how the liturgical cloud rose to ubiquity. Equally urgent is the question of how stable this motif truly was. The following chapter will present a tentative history of the development of the liturgical cloud both in image and text—from its distant origins in the clouds of decorative motifs and divinatory texts to its consolidation in paintings of the ninth century. This historical analysis will then lead into Chapter 2.3, which presents a group of unusual Song works that complicate the exceedingly tidy picture of the cloud motif that I have painted thus far.

Canonical Definitions

A history of the cloud might best begin with definitions of the object of inquiry. In some ways, defining “cloud” in period terms is a task as fraught with paradox as analyzing its visual form. Seemingly straightforward definitions are easy enough to find, though contradictory claims, and unsystematic usages of terms, complicate things immensely. The *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (*Imperially Reviewed Encyclopedia of the Taiping [xingguo] Era*), the Song-dynasty compendium of knowledge culled from over 1,690 sources, which was sponsored by Emperor Taizong 太宗 (939-997; r. 976-997) and edited by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996), provides a useful

starting place, as it compiles a vast range of pre-Song views of clouds.⁴⁸ Importantly, it includes citations of a number of Han through Six Dynasties (220-589) sources, the very period in which clouds (though not *liturgical* clouds), and cloud-riding immortals, rose to prominence in Chinese visual art.

The *Taiping yulan* first directs our attention to the *Shuowen jiezi*, the second-century CE dictionary that was the first systematized account of the Chinese written language and that served as the basis for all subsequent dictionaries. The *Shuowen* defines “clouds (*yun* 雲)” as “the ethers of mountains and rivers 山川气也.”⁴⁹ Clouds exist, then, between Heaven and Earth, and between land and water, a notion confirmed by another definition, taken from the Han-dynasty apocryphon 緯書 *Hetu di tongji* 河圖帝通紀, which remarks that “clouds are,” in fact, “the root of Heaven and Earth 雲者，天地之本也.”⁵⁰

Other passages cited in the *Taiping yulan* help to complete our definition. The Han apocryphon *Chunqiu yuanming bao* 春秋元命苞 specifies that “yin and yang collect to make clouds 陰陽聚為雲,”⁵¹ suggesting that clouds are visible condensations of *qi*, a notion that artisans tasked with creating paintings for the Water-Land Retreat took to heart, as we saw above.

⁴⁸ On clouds, see TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 66-73. Many of the citations in the TPYL vary slightly from our contemporary received editions of the same sources. I follow the TPYL citations in the main body of my text. When the differences between the versions are significant, I cite the alternate version in the footnote associated with each passage. Florian Reiter performs a similar review of the definitions and associations of “auspicious clouds” discussed in the Tang-dynasty *Categorized Collection of Literature* (*Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚) compiled by Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641). See Florian C. Reiter, “‘Auspicious Clouds’, an inspiring phenomenon of common interest in traditional China,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 141, no. 1 (1991): 114-130. On the place of clouds in Chinese culture more generally, including an interpretation of Chinese cultural production as being directly shaped by the atmospheric conditions of its landscape, see Gōyama Kiwamu 合山究, *Un'en no kuni: fūdo kara mita Chūgoku bunkaron* 雲烟の国：風土から見た中国文化論 (Tokyo: Tōhō Shoten, 1993).

⁴⁹ TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 66.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

The *Yi jing* 易經 (*Classic of Changes*)—a canonical text known to all Song scholars and frequently quoted in the *Taiping yulan* for its exemplary usages of many terms—develops the heavenly associations of clouds somewhat further, noting that they “ascend to Heaven and wait 雲上於天，需.”⁵² It further specifies that “clouds follow dragons 雲從龍”⁵³ and, indeed, that “those who summon clouds are dragons 召雲者龍,”⁵⁴ thereby articulating a link between dragons and clouds—and by extension, rain—which was to hold throughout the history of pre-modern China.⁵⁵ Clouds, then, are celestial bodies, rising always heavenward. They thus stand in opposition—in theory, at least—to mists (*wu* 霧), which the *Er ya* 爾雅, another early dictionary, defines as “terrestrial ethers [that] set forth [but to which] Heaven does not respond 地氣發，天不應.”⁵⁶ While this distinction may be posed as an important one,⁵⁷ in practice, the distinction between these two terms does not seem to have been strictly maintained in many

⁵² Ibid., 66.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ This association among dragons, clouds, and rain was demonstrated particularly brilliantly in ink painting, most notably in Chen Rong’s 陳容 (act. first half thirteenth century) 1244 *Jiu long tu* 九龍圖 (*Nine Dragons*), now in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See catalogue entry #92 in Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1,000 Years of Chinese Paintings* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1997), 197-200.

⁵⁶ *Er ya zhu* 爾雅注, annotated by Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1162), fasc. 2, 11a; SKQS edition.

⁵⁷ Some Japanese art historians also maintain this distinction when discussing the use of ethers in handscroll (*emaki* 絵巻), screen (*byōbu* 屏風), and sliding-door panel (*fusuma* ふすま) paintings. See, for example, Itō Mayumi 伊藤真弓, “Ikai no ba ni shutsugen suru yūun hyōgen ni tsuite 異界の場に出現する湧雲表現について,” *Nihon bijutsu no kikan to keishiki: Kawai Masatomo kyōju kanreki kinen ronbunshū* 日本美術の空間と形式「河合正朝教授還暦記念論文集」(Tokyo: Kawai Masatomo Kyōju Kanreki Kinen Ronbunshū Kankōkai, 2003), 63-78. Itō uses the term *kasumi* 霞, a type of haze or mist (in particular, the reddish glow that accompanies morning mist), to refer to the bands of ethers that divide spaces within handscroll paintings; by contrast, she uses the term *kumo* 雲 to refer to the cumuloid masses that suggest the manifestation of a supramundane being, one’s entry into the space of a dream, or one’s entry into a supramundane realm (*ikai* 異界). Izumi Mari 泉万里 includes a sustained formal account of clouds and mists in medieval Japanese screen paintings in “Unka keitai no seiritsu to tenkai: chusei yamatoe byōbu no issokumen 雲霞形態の成立と展開—中世和画屏風の側面,” *Museum* 447 (June 1988): 15-24, but does not seem to rigorously differentiate between the two terms.

contexts; in manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, and in descriptions of Buddhist images more generally, deities are said to descend on both “clouds” and “mists” and, sometimes, amid “smoke 煙.”⁵⁸ Further, the character for “smoke” forms a common compound with the character for “cloud”; the two are indissociable. Indeed, in certain contexts, “smoke” is actually best read as “mist,” further solidifying the link among these various nebulous bodies.

The Early *Imaginaire*

Besides providing these concise definitions culled from classical sources, the *Taiping yulan* also supplies more extended citations that give us some insight into the conceptual associations of the various terms it defines; in a sense, this compendium presents a sedimentation of the pre-Song literary *imaginaire* surrounding these terms. A brief overview of the connotations of clouds presented in the various pre-Song sources cited in the *Taiping yulan* may be useful before turning to early visual representations of the motif. The passages compiled in the text cover a range of topics, including the various forms and colors of clouds at different times of year,⁵⁹ the types of clouds unique to different states,⁶⁰ and the relatively practical divinatory meanings associated with the manifestation of certain clouds—the most common of which, not surprisingly, associates black clouds with rain.⁶¹ The *Yi fei hou* 易飛候, for example,

⁵⁸ Nevertheless, the distinction may remain useful for the analysis of artworks, and I will maintain it throughout this chapter, reserving the term “cloud” for the celestial mounts of deities and the term “mists” for the nebulous ethers from which ghosts emerge (and that one finds, too, filling the vistas of landscape paintings).

⁵⁹ See the citation from the Han apocryphon *Yitong guayan* 易通卦驗 in TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 67.

⁶⁰ See the citation from the military text identified simply as *Bing shu* 兵書 in *ibid.*, 71.

⁶¹ For thorough discussions of cloud portentology, which became of particular significance to the Tang military, see Ma Shichang 馬世長, “Dunhuang xian bowuguan cang Xing tu • Zhan yunqi shu canjuan 敦煌縣博物館藏星圖 • 占雲氣書殘卷,” in *Zhongguo fojiao shiku kaogu wenji* 中國佛教石窟考古文集 (Xinzhu: Juefeng foyi jijinhui, 2001), 443-465, esp. 452-465; and Ho Peng Yoke 何丙郁 and Ho Koon Piu 何冠彪, *Dunhuang canjuan Zhan yunqi shu yanjiu* 敦煌殘卷占雲氣書研究 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1985).

composed by the Han-dynasty *fengshui* specialist Jing Fang 京房, notes: “For all observing rain: if there are black clouds like a group of sheep, rushing like flying birds, then it must rain in five days 凡候雨，有黑雲如群羊，奔如飛鳥，五日必雨。”⁶² Cloud divination, which had been performed at court at least since the Spring and Autumn (722-481BCE) period,⁶³ seems to have particularly preoccupied the compilers of the *Taiping yulan*, who were charged with assembling an encyclopedia that, ultimately, reflected and responded to the concerns of the state. Indeed, through their choice of citations, they give something like a mini-history of cloud divination, beginning with the *Zhou li* 周禮 (*Rites of the Zhou*), the late-Warring States or early Han compendium of the laws, rites, and officials of the Zhou dynasty (1046-256BCE). The text indicates that cloud divination was vital for the Zhou state and that the “Royal Astrologer used [that is, observed] the five colors [green, white, red, black, and yellow, according to commentator Zheng] of clouds to determine auspiciousness or inauspiciousness 保章氏以五色雲物，辨吉凶之祲祥.”⁶⁴

Within both the divinatory texts and the historical records cited in the *Taiping yulan*, the manifestation of certain clouds, especially ethers purple 紫 or five-colored 五色・五彩 in hue, takes on auspicious connotations, frequently related to the birth or presence of an especially virtuous or sagacious person.⁶⁵ Jing Fang’s *Yi fei hou* notes that “if one sees that in the four

⁶² TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 67.

⁶³ See Ho and Ho, 28-31.

⁶⁴ TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 66-67. The phrasing of the received text, which is quoted, for example, in SS, fasc. 52, vol. 4, 107-108, differs from that quoted in the *Taiping yulan*: “Using the five clouds, he distinguishes the auspicious and inauspicious; water-logging and drought drop the inauspicious signs of abundance or fallowness 以五云之物辨吉凶，水旱降豐荒之祲象。”

⁶⁵ For more on purple clouds, see Nagata Masataka 永田真隆, “Ōjōden ni okeru shiun to yume 往生伝における紫雲と夢,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 57, no. 2 (March 2009): 740-743; and idem, “Shiun ni

directions, there are always great five-colored clouds, then below is where a sage hides 視四方常有
大雲五色，其下賢人隱也。”⁶⁶ The Han-dynasty apocryphon *Xiao jing yuanshen qi* 孝經援神
契, meanwhile, specifically associates clouds with virtue and filiality, noting, on the one hand,
that “when a king’s virtue is as lofty as the mountains, then auspicious clouds are seen 王者德至
山陵，則景雲見” and, similarly, that “when the Son of Heaven is filial, then auspicious clouds
are seen 天子孝則景雲見.”⁶⁷ Thus, it comes as little surprise that clouds should frequently
appear in historical accounts of the lives of particularly renowned emperors. Sima Qian’s *Shi ji*,
for example, notes that once “above Emperor Gaozu there were clouds that took the form of a
dragon and tiger; these were the ethers of the Son of Heaven 高祖之上有雲為龍虎之形，此天
子氣也.”⁶⁸ Clouds appear particularly frequently in accounts of Han Emperor Wu 武 (156-
87BCE; r. 141-87BCE), renowned for his devotion to cultivating immortality. Auspicious
ethers emerged in response to his performance of the *fengshan* 封禪 sacrifice at Mt. Tai 泰山,⁶⁹

kansuru ikkōsatsu 紫雲に関する一考察,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 58, no. 2 (March 2010): 833-836. In these short essays, Nagata shows the links between the color purple, virtue, and auspiciousness, and argues that the term “purple clouds 紫雲” did not necessarily refer to “clouds purple in color” but rather to “auspicious clouds.”

⁶⁶ TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 67.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁶⁹ See the citations from the *Han shu* 漢書 cited in *ibid.*: “Emperor Wu performed the *feng* sacrifice on Mt. Tai. At night, there was light, and in the morning, there were white clouds that arose from the *feng* altar 武帝封泰山，夜有光，晝有白雲，起於封中.” “After performing the *feng* sacrifice to Mt. Tai, the cloud ethers transformed into palace gates 封泰山後，雲氣成宮闕.”

his welcoming of ritual implements to a palace dedicated to the cultivation of immortality,⁷⁰ and the composition of rhapsodies for him.⁷¹

Histories of the Six Dynasties period, especially the accounts of the births of emperors, remain filled with such ethers, which are directly interpreted as “evidence 證” of the nobility of the newborn ruler.⁷² Very often, such clouds take the form of a “carriage canopy 車蓋,” shrouding the honored personage below. The links among clouds, auspiciousness, and sagacity or virtue are clear, then, from a very early period. Clouds canopy the virtuous as proof of their loftiness and in expression, or prognostication, of auspiciousness. Interestingly, these joyous clouds even come to be dissociated from the sage himself, serving instead as a material metaphor for the benevolence that such a sage confers on his lands. The *Li tong* 禮統, composed by He Shu 賀述 of the Liang dynasty (502-557), pushes this material metaphor quite far, saying that “clouds are that which move the ethers to spread benevolence universally 雲者，運氣布恩普博也.”⁷³ Clouds thus possess a certain degree of agency, and significantly, that agency is directly linked to benevolence, a quality not far removed from the compassion of the Buddha, who, as we will soon see, frequently manifested that quality through the metaphorical medium of the cloud.

⁷⁰ See the citation from the *Han shu* 漢書 cited in *ibid.*: “When Emperor Wu welcomed the *ding* tripod of Fenyang to the Ganquan Palace, yellow clouds canopied it 武帝迎汾陽鼎至甘泉宮，黃雲蓋其上。”

⁷¹ See the citation from the *Han shu* 漢書 cited in *ibid.*: “[Sima] Xiangru composed the ‘Rhapsody of the Great Man,’ and when the emperor perused it, the lofty ethers of clouds fluttered by [司馬] 相如作「大人賦」，帝覽之，飄飄有凌雲之氣。”

⁷² See the citation from the *Wei zhi* 魏志 in *ibid.*: “When Emperor Wen was born in Qiao County in the state of Pei, above were clouds green in color and [in the shape of] a round canopy. All day long they did not disperse. Observers of the ethers [that is, diviners] took this as evidence of a person of highest nobility; these were not the ethers of a [mere] official 文帝生於沛國譙縣，上有雲氣青色而圓蓋，終日不解，望氣者以為至貴人之證，非人臣之氣。”

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 68.

Early Visual Representations

The formal development of the cloud motif in early Chinese art of the period roughly coincident with these sources cited in the *Taiping yulan* has been the subject of a number of studies, primarily in Japanese, over the course of the past six decades. Kosugi Kazuo 小杉 一雄 and Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, for example, have both presented detailed formalist histories of the earliest development of cloud patterns. Beginning in the 1950s, Kosugi argued that the “treasure cloud 寶雲” pattern consisting of a tail and three tufted heads, seen especially commonly on Tang-dynasty metalwork (Figure 2.28) and which more-or-less became the model for the form of the liturgical cloud, developed from the grass and dragon patterns seen on Shang- and Zhou-dynasty bronzewares and jades (Figure 2.29).⁷⁴ In the Han, and especially during the Six Dynasties period, Kosugi argues, figures came to be depicted mounted on this pattern, which increasingly came to resemble clouds (Figure 2.30). This pattern of development was accompanied by a move from the “patterned-ness” of earlier Chinese art toward the “painterliness”—Kosugi’s short-hand for an object’s being characterized by its possessing meaning-bearing motifs—of later Chinese art. Ultimately, Kosugi’s key interest seems to lie in establishing a teleological model of formal development for the various visual patterns found on Chinese and Japanese objects; he seems to have less interest in the historical forces that may have driven that development. Hayashi takes a similarly focused formalist approach to the development of *qi* patterns, finding their origins in feather patterns on Shang- and Zhou-dynasty bronzes and jades.⁷⁵ Such visions of these early pictorial clouds, however, seem far detached

⁷⁴ Kosugi’s writings on clouds have been published in several places. For a summary of his thoughts, see Kosugi Kazuo 小杉一雄, “Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について,” *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): 199-206.

⁷⁵ Hayashi Minao 林巳奈夫, “Chugoku kodai no ibutsu ni arawasareta ‘ki’ no zuzōteki hyōgen 中國古代の遺物に表はされた「氣」の圖像的表現,” *Tōhō gakuho* 東方学報 61 (1989): 1-93.

from the auspicious connotations described in texts of the era. For that more vivid picture, other visual sources are needed.

An Immortal Turn

Casting a broader net, one finds that cloud-borne spirits abound in the furnishings of Han-dynasty tombs. In the famed tomb of Xin Zhui 辛追, the Marquise of Dai 軫侯夫人, excavated near Changsha 長沙, Hunan Province, in 1972, and dated to circa 168 BCE, sinuous, *qi*-like cloud patterns cover the surface of the majority of the lacquerwares interred with the deceased (Figure 2.7).⁷⁶ Attenuated, snaking bands of *qi* and clouds rendered in varying colors similarly decorate the black lacquer surface of the second of her four nesting coffins (Figure 2.31). Here, however, animals, serpents, birds, and fantastic hunters interact among these sinuous bands, in some passages seemingly borne forth by them; in others, perhaps inhaling and exhaling them. These interactions among the creatures and the clouds have led Eugene Y. Wang to argue that this coffin depicts the revitalization of the deceased's soul through the picture's symbolic performance of *qigong*-like exercises. Performed through the medium of the pictures rendered on the coffins themselves, such exercises would restore the balance of *yin* and *yang qi* in the body, ensuring for the deceased a form of post-mortem immortality.⁷⁷

Indeed, in this period, the space of the tomb as a whole seems to have been conceived as a site for the revivification of the deceased through such symbolic conjoining of *yin* and *yang*

⁷⁶ For an insightful, historically contextualized discussion of these cloud-like decorative motifs, see Martin J. Powers, *Pattern and Person: Ornament, Society, and Self in Classical China* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 227-252. I thank Prof. Tamara Chin for bringing this source to my attention.

⁷⁷ See Eugene Y. Wang, "Ascend to Heaven or Stay in the Tomb? Paintings in Mawangdui Tomb 1 and the Virtual Ritual of Revival in Second-Century BCE China," in *Mortality in Traditional Chinese Thought*, edited by Amy Olberding and J. Ivanhoe (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 37-84; idem, "Why Pictures in Tombs? Mawangdui Once More," *Orientations* 40, no. 2 (March 2009): 76-83; and idem, "Whereto Heaven? New Perspective on Mawangdui Paintings," in *Noble Tombs at Mawangdui: Art and Life of the Changsha Kingdom, Third Century BCE to First Century CE* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2008), 41-52, esp. 42-44.

vapors. These vapors could be depicted literally as sinuous, cloud-like bands—as on the ceiling of the well-known Western Han (206BCE-9CE) tomb of Bo Qianqiu 卜千秋 near the ancient capital of Luoyang 洛陽 in Henan Province (Figure 2.6)—or more symbolically as the directional animals, the Green Dragon 青龍 of the East and the White Tiger 白虎 of the West—as in a number of Eastern Han (25-220) sarcophagi in Sichuan Province (Figure 2.32).⁷⁸ But most importantly for our study of deity-conveying clouds, in a number of tomb murals, figures are, indeed, represented borne aloft by these still-sinuous, *qi*-like bands of clouds. Near Luoyang, in a Xin-dynasty (9BCE-23CE) tomb discovered in 1991, the Queen Mother of the West 西王母 is depicted seated atop red cloudbanks, engaged in dialogue with a hare (Figure 2.33). In a contemporaneous tomb unearthed in 2009 near Yangqiaopan 楊橋畔 in Jingbian County 靖邊縣, Shaanxi Province, anthropomorphic astral deities depicted in charts of constellations fly through the sky borne by cloud-shaped chariots (Figure 2.34), while in Eastern Han tombs discovered in the same region, banner-bearing immortals soar through the skies, their cumuloid chariots pulled by celestial animals (Figure 2.35). Although all of these nebulous images are of relatively small scale, integrated into much larger, more complex compositions, they nevertheless demonstrate that the cloud-borne figure captured the period imagination. Where, exactly, have these vehicular clouds come from?

The contemporary passages in the *Taiping yulan* discussed above do little to help us with these vivid images. While the compendium gives a broad overview of the general connotations of clouds in and before the Song, its examples all tend more-or-less toward the political; as we saw above, even when discussing the supernatural, portentous nature of clouds, it speaks almost

⁷⁸ See Eugene Wang, “Jouissance of Death?: Han Sarcophagi from Sichuan and the Art of Physiological Alchemy,” *Res* 61/62 (Spring/Autumn 2012): 152-166.

exclusively of their foretelling events of consequence to the state. Though not particularly concerned with the religious side of things, several passages quoted in the compendium nevertheless do give some indication of one of the most common usages of clouds in the visual and literary arts, Buddhist, Daoist, and otherwise—namely, as a means of conveying deities and immortals. It cites but one example, from the *Han Wu di neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (*Inner Biography of Emperor Wu of Han*), a collection of legends about this immortality-obsessed emperor probably compiled during the Six Dynasties. This text speaks of the “Queen Mother of the West arriving, mounted on a carriage of purple clouds 西王母至，乘紫雲之輦.”⁷⁹ Thus, in the texts of this early period, not only do clouds serve as signifiers of sages, as we saw above, but also do they physically convey them.

A number of early texts not cited in the *Taiping yulan* also speak of saintly beings’ flitting about on clouds. The aforementioned images from Han-dynasty tombs give us a good sense of how these fantastic flights were visually imagined. As the art historian Hida Romi 肥田路美 has noted, clouds and immortals had long been indivisible in the Chinese imagination.⁸⁰ The “Xiaoyao you 逍遙遊” (“Free and Easy Wandering”) chapter of the Inner Section 內篇 of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, for example, remarks that

there is a Holy Man living on Moguyue Mountain, with skin like ice or snow, and gentle and shy like a young girl. He does not eat the five grains, but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, mounts the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas.

⁷⁹ TPYL, fasc. 8, vol. 1, 70.

⁸⁰ Over the past fifteen years, Hida has written a series of three essays that draw from earlier studies of cloud patterns in the Six Dynasties and before, while also developing the narrative further to treat the use of clouds in Tang-dynasty transformation tableaux. See Hida Romi 肥田路美, “Hen to kumo: daikōzu hensō ni okeru imi to kinō wo megutte 変と雲—大構図変相における意味と機能をめぐって,” *Waseda daigaku daigakuin bungaku kenkyūka kiyō* 早稲田大学大学院文学研究科紀要 3 (1999): 123-137; idem, “Daigamen hensōzu no seiritsu to kumo no mochiifu 大画面変相図の成立と雲のモチーフ,” in idem, *Shotō bukyō bijutsu no kenkyū* 初唐仏教美術の研究 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2011), 349-369; and idem, “Unkimon no shinka to igi.”

藐姑射之山，有神人居焉，肌膚若冰雪，淖約若處子，不食五穀，吸風飲露。乘雲氣，御飛龍，而遊乎四海之外。”⁸¹

Reading this passage, it is difficult not to think of the small scenes lining the walls of the tombs in Yangqiaopan. Postdating the *Zhuangzi* by several centuries, these murals present something like an expanded pantheon of various such holy men who ride the clouds. Interestingly, the Eastern Han *Lunheng* 論衡, contemporaneous with those tombs, describes depictions of such figures, remarking that “when rendering the form of an immortal, its body [is shown to] produce hair; its arms transform into wings, and it moves on clouds 圖仙人之形，體生毛，臂變為翼，行於雲。”⁸² Such a description necessarily brings to mind the small, fantastic figures moving among the bands of *qi* on Lady Dai’s coffin two centuries earlier. The place of the cloud-borne immortal in the contemporary *imaginaire* was assured.

The Six Dynasties and the Rise of Buddhist Clouds

Buddhist interest in the visual motif of the cloud seems to have lagged slightly behind that of these designers of tombs and describers of immortal realms; but over the course of the Six Dynasties period, especially in the late fifth and sixth centuries, the Buddhist cloud experienced its first period of efflorescence. In the mural paintings of the Mogao Grottoes near Dunhuang—a convenient site through which to investigate the formal development of visual motifs in Chinese Buddhist art from the fifth through thirteenth centuries—, one can clearly see that cloud-like

⁸¹ “Xiaoyao you 逍遙遊,” chap. 1 in *Zhuangzi* 莊子, fasc. 1, pt. 1, annotated by Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, punctuated by Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 28; HJDZ edition. Quoted in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 6. Translation adapted from *The Complete Works of Chuang-tzu*, translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 33.

⁸² Wang Chong 王充 (ca. 27-97), *Lunheng* 論衡 (reprinted as *Lunheng jiaoshi* 論衡校釋), fasc. 2, annotated by Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 66; HJDZ edition. Quoted in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 6.

bands of *qi* suddenly appear in the empty spaces surrounding heavenly beings like *apsarases* 飛天 and *devas* 天, such as Indra and Brahma, in the middle of the Northern Wei (386-535) dynasty.

Such heavenly beings were depicted in the earliest painted caves opened at Dunhuang—for example, Caves 272 and 275 of the Northern Liang (397-439) dynasty—, soaring through the firmament above the heads of buddhas and bodhisattvas, robes and ribbons flowing behind them as they scatter flowers in offering to the saints below (Figure 2.36). Nowhere, however, is any indication of their means, or medium, of conveyance given; they simply fly through a void. By the end of the fifth century, things had begun to change. *Apsarases* and *devas* still soared above enlightened beings, raining down flowers from their typical location on the cave's ceiling, but no longer is the surrounding firmament empty. Rather, small, attenuated *qi*-bands or cloud-clumps began to be rendered, frequently as no more than an oval dab of mineral pigment—often blue, brown, or light gray—placed atop another dab of identical color smeared backward to form a short, sketchy tail (Figure 2.37).

Only sparsely employed in Northern Wei grottoes, such as Caves 431 or 248, by the middle of the sixth century, in Western Wei (535-557) caves such as the dazzling Cave 285, the motif was everywhere (Figures 2.38 and 2.39). Heavenly beings fill almost the entire surface of the ceiling of this cave—whose lower reaches depict monks meditating in caves burrowed into mountains and forests shrouded by dense, meteorological cloud banks, and whose apex, like many caves of the period, has been painted to resemble the bells and ribbons crowning a square tent canopy. These celestial figures, both Buddhist and non-, soar amid innumerable bands of *qi* rendered with long, thin reddish lines that curl into scalloped hooks at their heads and from which sprout smeared tufts of blue-and-white clouds. The spatial conceit of the ceiling is clear:

this is a heavenly realm, removed from the terrestrial realms in which the wall-bound buddhas depicted below preach, and to which the monks meditating in the mountain caves at the firmament's base might aspire after attaining a particular *samādhī* 三昧.

Finally, it is important to note that despite the prevalence of such clouds in these Six Dynasties caves, it was not until the end of the sixth century, during the Sui dynasty (589-618), that clouds regularly came to be shown *conveying* (and not just *surrounding*) spirits. This difference becomes clear in Cave 278. Here, black clouds outlined in white—their long tails and triple, vaguely fungal, heads appearing not so far removed from the clouds depicted nearly eight centuries later at Qinglong si—are shown to convey both generic *apsarases* and the more specific earth spirits that carried the Buddha Śākyamuni's horse as he surreptitiously escaped from his palace at night to become an ascetic (Figures 2.40 and 2.41). As Hida Romi has shown, however, such highly material, vehicular cumuloid masses actually first appeared several decades earlier, during the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), as is attested by a carved relief depicting the Western Pure Land in Cave 2 at Xiangtang shan 響堂山 in Hebei Province, now in the collection of the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C. (Figure 2.42).⁸³

The broader implications of and inspirations behind these cloud-surrounded figures have been the subject of sustained inquiry in recent years. Building on the earlier investigations into the formal development of cloud patterns by scholars such as Kosugi and Hayashi, several art historians have focused specifically on the development of this type of cloud imagery during the Six Dynasties. In particular, these scholars have discussed the formal and conceptual development of the images of *apsarases* that seem to have so captured the imagination of writers and artisans in the Six Dynasties, and they have linked the proliferation of these figures to the

⁸³ Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 10.

resurgence of Daoism in the period.⁸⁴ A number of parallels between the heavenly flights of these Buddhist beings and Six Dynasties Daoist interest in postmortem flights to immortality 遊仙, a particularly popular subject of poems and rhapsodies in the period, have been suggested.⁸⁵ Significantly, it seems to have been within the context of Chinese depictions of *apsarases* that clouds first began to appear in Buddhist art in general. Indeed, with rare exceptions—as in Cave 2 at Ajanta—, clouds almost never are seen in Indian Buddhist art until several centuries after their appearance in China, leading scholars to see the motif as uniquely Chinese and its later Indian appearance as the result of borrowing from Chinese visual traditions.

Closely focusing on the depictions of the “flowing clouds 流雲” discussed above in the context of Northern and Western Wei caves at Mogao, Inoue Masaru 井上豪 has made the important observation that these *apsarases* are visually characterized by their remarkable sense of fluidity; as noted above, they tend to be surrounded by running lines that suggest the flow of *qi* more than they do the floating presence of “clouds.”⁸⁶ Indeed, Inoue suggests that *apsarases* and *qi* are so closely intertwined in these depictions that they become, in essence, one. In a sense, this quality links these early representations of *apsarases* more closely to the ethereal *qi*-like cloud-patterns of the Han and before discussed by Kosugi and Hayashi than to the more material clouds of the Tang and after. However, it also gives Inoue the opportunity to link these wisps of *qi* both to early literary descriptions of auspicious clouds and to descriptions of the wisps of incense smoke ascending from braziers, such as the mountain-shaped incense censers (*boshanlu*

⁸⁴ See, for example, Hayashi On 林温, “Hiten to shinsen 飛天と神仙,” in *Nihon no bijutsu* 日本の美術 330 (November 1993): esp. 28-40.

⁸⁵ On such poems, see, for example, Edward H. Schafer, “Wu Yün’s 吳筠 Stanzas on ‘Saunters in Sylphdom’ 遊仙詩,” *Monumenta Serica* 35 (1981-1983): 309-345.

⁸⁶ Inoue, 149-166.

博山爐) that became requisite paraphernalia in Daoist rituals and that were also frequently used in Buddhist liturgical practices (Figure 2.43).⁸⁷ The smoke of such burners is vividly described in an inscription on a censer belonging to Emperor Xiaoyuan 孝元 (508-555; r. 552-554) of the Liang dynasty:

The styrax incense thickly swirls,
not like smoke but like clouds.
At times thickening, then thinning,
suddenly collecting, and yet again dispersing.

蘇合氤氲 非煙若雲
時穠更薄 乍聚還分.⁸⁸

The inscription again recalls the phrasing of the *Shi ji* (“like smoke, but not smoke; like clouds, but not clouds 若煙非煙，若雲非雲”), establishing a literary link between the incense smoke of this mountain-shaped censer and the auspicious ethers described by Sima Qian. Given the great popularity of these censers in the Han and Six Dynasties, Inoue argues that the thin, C-shaped wisps of incense that ascended from them became the model for depictions of *qi* in the period. Moreover, he goes on to make the broader claim that Buddhism may well have owed its quick acceptance in China less to the elaborate *geyi* 格義 schema (the matching of the meanings of Buddhist terms with ostensibly similar, indigenous Chinese, especially Daoist, counterparts) of Six Dynasties monastic intellectuals and more to the fact that Buddhist practices—such as the burning of incense, the presentation of offerings, and even the bodily postures adopted when making offerings—shared so many similarities with indigenous Chinese traditions.

⁸⁷ For an introduction to the Daoist altar—in particular, the way in which it itself is envisioned as a mountain—, see Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, translated by Karen C. Duval (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 91-99.

⁸⁸ “Liang Xiaoyuandi xianglu ming 梁孝元帝香爐銘,” quoted in Inoue, 160.

Further developing this narrative of the rising popularity of the cloud motif in the context of Six Dynasties Buddhism, Hida Romi points to an important passage in the sixth-century *Luoyang qielan ji* 洛陽伽藍記 (*A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luoyang*) that suggests just how fully such imagery had pervaded the popular consciousness. The text records that the south gate 南門 of Yongning si 永寧寺 (Monastery of Eternal Tranquility), the largest temple in the city, “resembled the present-day Duan Gate [that is, the south gate of the palace compound]. It was rendered with clouds and ethers and painted colorfully with immortals and spirits 形製似今端門。圖以雲氣，畫彩仙靈.”⁸⁹ Interestingly, the phrasing in this passage closely resembles that in the “Wu du fu 吳都賦” (“Rhapsody on the Capital of Wu”) written nearly two centuries earlier by the Western Jin 西晉 (265-316) poet Zuo Si 左思 (ca. 250-305). This poem was included in the *Wen xuan* 文選 (*Selections of Refined Literature*), compiled in approximately 520 by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531), the eldest son of Emperor Wu 武 (464-549; r. 502-549) of the Liang dynasty—who, as was discussed in Part 1 of this dissertation, was regarded as the legendary composer of the first Water-Land liturgy. Zuo Si’s rhapsody tells us that the buildings of the city had “carved brackets [and] incised bearing blocks, blue door-engraving [and] vermeil pillars, [and they] were painted with clouds and vapors, drawn with immortals and spirits 雕鏤鏤棗，青瑣丹楹，圖以雲氣，畫以仙靈.”⁹⁰ In other words, clouds and immortals—presumably,

⁸⁹ Yang Xuanchi 楊衒之 (act. mid sixth century), *Luoyang qielan ji jiaozhu* 洛陽伽藍記校注, fasc. 1, annotated by Fan Xiangyong 范祥雍 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 3. Quoted in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 5. An alternative translation is included in Yang Hsüan-chih, *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-yang*, translated by Yi-t’ung Wang (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 17.

⁹⁰ Zuo Si 左思 (ca. 250-305), “Wu du fu 吳都賦,” in *Wen xuan* 文選, fasc. 5, compiled by Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531), annotated by Li Shan 李善 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), vol. 1, 217. Quoted in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 5. Translation adapted from *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, compiled by Xiao Tong, translated by David R. Knechtges (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), vol. 1, 397-399.

cloud-mounted immortals, though the passages do not specifically say this—had captured the period imagination and became a motif popular enough to be liberated from the underground confines of tombs and to be depicted instead on public pieces of architecture, both secular and Buddhist.

Into the Tang

While Hida's discussion of these Han and Six Dynasties materials is useful in developing the ideas incipient in earlier scholars' essays, her primary aim seems to have been to describe and analyze the usage of clouds in Tang-dynasty transformation tableaux, where small-scale billowing bodies convey deities in grand, narrative compositions. Given that she is the only scholar to have focused great attention on Tang Buddhist uses of the cloud motif, both pictorial and textual, her arguments are worth rehearsing in detail. She presents two main historical contentions. First, she puts forth the formalist argument that the ethereal, wispy, *qi*-like cloud-forms of the Six Dynasties began to give way to the fuller, more material cloud-forms seen in Tang works (not only in transformation tableaux, but also in metalwork, stone carvings, etc.) in the Northern Qi, as exemplified by the Xiangtang shan relief discussed above. She suggests that this transformation corresponded to a change in manners of figural depiction in this period—namely, a move from the thin, flowing, abstract, “conceptual” bodies of the Six Dynasties to the fuller, more material, comparatively naturalistic bodies of the Tang. Second, she argues that although Six Dynasties poets and Daoist writers throughout the medieval period described immortals ascending to the heavens on clouds, in a purely Buddhist literary context, the first textual descriptions of clouds as vehicles of divine conveyance *postdate* the appearance of cloud-vehicles in transformation tableaux. Indeed, she shows that by the mid seventh century, clouds were used in a wide variety of ways within transformation tableaux; however, it was not until the

ninth century that they started to play similar roles in the “transformation texts 變文” that have sometimes been seen as textual counterparts to the tableaux found at sites like Dunhuang.⁹¹

The high-Tang *Lotus Sutra* tableau on the north wall of Mogao Cave 23 (Figure 2.44) and the early-Tang *Vimalakīrti Sutra* tableau on the east wall of Mogao Cave 335 (dated circa 686 based on a donor inscription on the north wall of the cave brushed in the second year of the Chuigong 垂拱 era [685-688]) (Figure 2.45) serve as the focus of Hida’s analysis. The functions of the cloud motifs depicted in these two tableaux fall into two broad categories. On the one hand, we can note a more-or-less naturalistic, or meteorological, depiction of clouds in scenes such as that illustrating Chapter Five of the *Lotus Sutra*, “The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs 藥草喻品,” in Cave 23 (Figure 2.46).⁹² In this chapter, the Buddha Śākyamuni is described as “appear[ing] in the world like a great cloud rising up 出現於世，如大雲起，”⁹³ and his teachings are compared to “the rain falling from that great cloud upon all the plants and trees, thickets and groves, and medicinal herbs. Each, depending upon its species and nature, receives its full share of moistening and is enabled to sprout and grow 如彼大雲，雨於一切卉木叢林及諸藥草，如其種性，具足蒙潤，各得生長.”⁹⁴ This metaphor is taken literally in Cave 23, where the

⁹¹ Although the relationship between transformation tableaux and transformation texts is complex, it seems quite likely that the texts were modeled on the tableaux, and not vice versa, as was long assumed by scholars. See Wu Hung, “What is *Bianxiang*? On the Relationship between Dunhuang Art and Dunhuang Literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 52, no. 1 (June 1993): 111-192.

⁹² Hida, “Hen to kumo,” 128.

⁹³ *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華經, translated by Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344-413), fasc. 3, in T9, no. 262, 19b. Translation from *The Lotus Sutra*, translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 98.

⁹⁴ *Miaofa lianhua jing*, fasc. 3, in T9, no. 262, 19b. Translation from *The Lotus Sutra*, 99. The poetic recapitulation of this prose section develops the metaphor more explicitly, saying that the Buddha and his teachings are “like a great cloud / that rises up in the world / and covers it all over. / This beneficent cloud is laden with moisture, 譬如大雲，起於世間，遍覆一切；慧雲含潤/ ... The rain falls everywhere, / coming down on all four sides. / Its flow and saturation are measureless, / reaching to every area of the earth, 其雨普等，四方俱下，流澍無量，率土充洽。 / ... What falls from the cloud / is water of a single flavor, / but the plants and trees, thickets and groves, / each

clouds, ostensibly signifying the Buddha, appear as an amorphous gray mass, enlivened with hastily brushed, scalloped, spiraling outlines not completely dissimilar to those found at Qinglong si. The rain of his dharma is then rendered with quick vertical brushstrokes, descending from the cloud to fertilize the fields below. Metaphor is, in other words, made completely natural.

On the other hand, clouds fulfill a variety of non-natural, far more conceptual or narrative functions. Hida enumerates four such functions as found in Cave 335. First, clouds surround deities to emphasize the sense of their movement.⁹⁵ Such clouds do not necessarily bear the deities but serve instead as almost prop-like motifs signifying motion, much as can also be noted in Six Dynasties depictions of *apsarases*. This function is exemplified by the long-tailed, rather wispy clouds that surround the lion thrones and bodhisattvas summoned by Vimalakīrti from the eastern land called Sumeru Shape 須彌相國, which appear above Vimalakīrti's canopy on the right side of this tableau (Figure 2.47).⁹⁶ Second, clouds serve to convey figures as they fly divinely through the heavens. Individually, these clouds resemble those that simply convey a sense of motion, though with less attenuated tails; however, when used to support deities, such clouds tend to become more densely grouped, the multiple heads of each cloud-tail nearly overlapping to give a sense of distinct material presence. This can be seen particularly clearly beneath the assemblies of bodhisattvas accompanying the Buddha Fragrance Accumulated 香積

accept the moisture that is appropriate to its portion 其雲所出，一味之水，草木叢林，隨分受潤。” See *Miaofa lianhua jing*, fasc. 3, in T9, no. 262, 19c; translation from *The Lotus Sutra*, 100-101.

⁹⁵ Hida, “Hen to kumo,” 129-130.

⁹⁶ See “Busiyi pin 不思議品,” chap. 6 in *Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經, translated by Kumārajīva (344-413), 鳩摩羅什, fasc. 2, in T14, no. 475, 546a-547a. Translated in *The Vimalakirti Sutra*, translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 75-82.

佛, descending over the head of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī 文殊 (Figure 2.48).⁹⁷ Third, clouds with longer tails but similarly dense heads visible in the same section of the tableau convey bodhisattvas as they *instantaneously* rush from their land of Many Fragrances 眾香國 to carry fragrant rice 香飯 in offering to Vimalakīrti (Figure 2.49).⁹⁸ Fourth, clouds are used to suggest a sense of manifestation or conjuration, as with the depiction of Vimalakīrti’s conjuring the Buddha Akṣobhya’s land of Wonderful Joy 妙喜國 in our world, rendered on the far right-hand side of the tableau (Figure 2.50).⁹⁹

Ultimately, though, Hida suggests that clouds’ most important function is to suggest the flow of time, be it the instant of manifestation or the longer duration of heavenly flight. This imbues clouds with an inherent sense of narrativity—a sense that they retain even within liturgical settings, where the narrative shifts from being one of sutra tales to being one of ritual action.¹⁰⁰ Yet, as she perceptively points out, never are clouds specifically described in the text of the *Vimalakīrti Sutra* itself; instead the evocations of divine flight and manifestation are more generic. Deities pictured riding on clouds are textually described as simply “entering

⁹⁷ See “Xiangji fo pin 香積佛品,” chap. 10 in *Weimojie suo shuo jing*, fasc. 3, in T14, no. 475, 552a-553b. Translated in *The Vimalakīrti Sutra*, 112-120.

⁹⁸ Hida, “Hen to kumo,” 130.

⁹⁹ Hida, 131. See “Jian Achu fo pin 見阿閼佛品,” chap. 12 in *Weimojie suo shuo jing*, fasc. 3, in T14, no. 475, 554c-555c. Translated in *The Vimalakīrti Sutra*, 130-135; see esp. 133-134.

¹⁰⁰ Itō Mayumi makes similar points regarding the narrative functions of clouds in medieval Japanese *emaki*. She notes that they serve to mark the place where a saintly figure appears, to mark the place where a religious experience occurs, to mark a temple or sacred mountain, to mark the manifestation of something extraordinary, to delineate the space of a dream, and to signify other realms or other lands (within our world). See Itō, 65. She also makes the important historical observation that clouds did not become an object of period interest until the late Kamakura period (1185-1333)—that is, a moment contemporaneous with the late Song and Yuan dynasties, when clouds were ubiquitous in Chinese Buddhist art and when monastic exchange between China and Japan was flourishing. See *ibid.*, 76.

Vimalakīrti's chamber 來入維摩詰室,”¹⁰¹ or “coming into Vimalakīrti's Chamber, riding the void 乘空來入無垢稱室.”¹⁰²

Hida concludes her art historical discussion of the role of clouds in transformation tableaux with a description of their appearance in early Pure Land imagery, including the depiction of the Western Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha in Cave 45 (Figure 2.51) and the depiction of the Eastern Pure Land 東方淨土 of the Medicine Buddha 藥師佛 in Cave 220 (Figure 2.52). Here, again, although clouds abound in the tableaux, serving especially to carry deities, nowhere are clouds to be found in the corresponding textual passages in the sutras that underlie the pictorial compositions. Clouds, in other words, while seemingly integral to the genre of the Tang transformation tableau, whose connections to text are indisputable, are purely visual innovations—the inventions of the pictorial programmers charged with translating linear texts into spatialized, multi-temporal paintings.¹⁰³

Other scholars, such as Tanaka Nami 田中奈美, have also noted the lack of correspondence between the usage of the cloud motif in sutra texts related to Amitābha's Pure Land and in transformation tableaux of the same subject.¹⁰⁴ Tanaka, however, does find scattered references to purple clouds 紫雲, long a symbol of virtue, in Six Dynasties and Tang biographies of people who ascended to the Pure Land 往生傳. Importantly, Tanaka shows that the manifestation of clouds in these tales has little, if anything, to do with the functions outlined

¹⁰¹ *Weimojie suo shuo jing*, fasc. 2, in T14, no. 475, 546b.

¹⁰² See *Shuo Wugoucheng jing* 說無垢稱經, translated by Xuanzang 玄奘 (602-664), fasc. 3, in T14, no. 476, 570c.

¹⁰³ For further discussion of such pictorial innovations, see Wu, “What is *Bianxiang*?,” 111-192.

¹⁰⁴ Tanaka Nami 田中奈美, “Jōdokyō kaiga ni mirareru kumo ni tsuite 浄土教絵画に見られる雲について,” *Bijutsushi kenkyū* 美術史研究 35 (1997): 123-138.

above in our discussions of mural paintings; rather, the manifestation of purple clouds seems simply to be a signifier of the great virtue of the person who is ascending to the Pure Land. Much as auspicious clouds would appear when a new, virtuous ruler was born, so, too, would clouds appear when such a person died and ascended to the Pure Land.¹⁰⁵ In other words, through the early Tang, and even shortly after, the functions of textual clouds remained clearly, albeit surprisingly, divorced from those of their painted counterparts.

Yet writers of popular adaptations of sutra tales were not far behind in integrating painters' innovations into their texts, as Hida has also shown. Ninth-century transformation texts recovered from Mogao Cave 17 based on the *Vimalakīrti* and Western Pure Land Sutras include incredibly vivid cumuloid imagery. Regarding the Āmra garden of Vaiśālī, the scene of Śākyamuni's sermon in the "Buddha Lands 佛國品" chapter of the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, Stein manuscript 4571 in the British Library speaks throughout of "heavenly flowers falling 天花墜"¹⁰⁶ amid clouds wherein one "only smells camphor smoke 雲內唯聞龍腦煙"¹⁰⁷; it speaks of "auspicious colors and propitious clouds filling the Nine Heavens 瑞色祥雲遍九垓,"¹⁰⁸ of "colored mists manifesting auspiciousness, and glowing clouds adorned with good fortune, towering as they array in ranks, and paying homage to the King of the Dharma Wheel 彩霧呈佳瑞，霞雲珮吉祥，縱縱排隊伍，瞻禮法輪王，"¹⁰⁹ and of "humans and non-humans, arrayed

¹⁰⁵ Dealing with the slightly different context of medieval Japanese textual accounts of clouds, Itō Mayumi notes that cloud-related language often is used to signify death; dying, for example, is called, literally, "being hidden by clouds (*kumogakure* 雲隠れ)." Clouds also serve in these texts as signifiers of vast distances, as signifiers of other realms, and as vehicles of divine conveyance. See Itō, 69.

¹⁰⁶ DHBW, 233. Cited in Hida, "Unkimon no shinka to igi," 131.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ DHBW, 242. Cited in Hida, "Unkimon no shinka to igi," 131.

¹⁰⁹ DHBW, 245. Cited in Hida, "Unkimon no shinka to igi," 131.

among pure gates and forts, at once descending in the emptiness, all coming on clouds 人與非人等，清閭塞排，一時空裏降，齊總下雲來。”¹¹⁰ In a section of the transformation text corresponding to the “Bodhisattvas 菩薩品” chapter of the sutra, these divine beings are described as “at once all descending amid clouds, fully entering the interior of the meditation chamber 一時皆下於雲中，盡入修禪之室內”¹¹¹; similarly, they are said to be “carrying medicine containers, and gasping, moving back and forth on clouds gradually descending 擎藥器，又吹噓，宛轉雲頭漸下來。”¹¹² Meanwhile, Pelliot manuscripts 122 and 3210 and Beijing manuscript Yin 殷 62, which all transcribe the *Fo shuo Amituo jing jiangjing wen* 佛說阿彌陀經講經文 (*Homiletic Texts on the Sutra of Amitābha Spoken by the Buddha*), create a heavenly image of the Western Pure Land, speaking of “reborn children mounting the Golden Bridge, supported by five-colored clouds as treasure seats swing 化生童子上金橋，五色雲擎寶座搖”¹¹³ and “clouds supporting towers and pavilions, descending from the vast void 雲擎樓閣下長空。”¹¹⁴ Although a direct correspondence cannot necessarily be established between the specific scenes illustrated in transformation tableaux at the Mogao Caves and these textual descriptions of clouds, it is nevertheless clear that the texts and images partake of a shared visual *imaginaire*. And from a historical perspective, it seems likely that the texts follow the paintings by as much as two centuries.

¹¹⁰ DHBW, 247. Cited in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 131.

¹¹¹ DHBW, 344. Cited in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 131.

¹¹² DHBW, 345. Cited in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 131.

¹¹³ DHBW, 178. Cited in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 131.

¹¹⁴ DHBW, 177. Cited in Hida, “Unkimon no shinka to igi,” 131.

Admittedly, the texts are not dated (though their calligraphy can be), and the majority of materials contained within Cave 17 are skewed toward the ninth and tenth centuries—that is, materials produced within a century or so of the closure of the cave circa 1030. Given our lack of transformation texts from earlier centuries, it is impossible to say whether or not clouds served as a prominent textual motif in earlier periods. Nevertheless, I would argue that it is no coincidence that clouds only came to appear in texts written in the late Tang and after. Indeed, while as Hida has shown, clouds were frequently depicted in transformation tableau from the late sixth century, and especially the seventh century, onward, it was not until the ninth century that they truly captured the period imagination. It is to the formational moment of the ninth century that we will turn after two brief excursions on some unusual Buddhist uses of clouds in medieval scriptures and accounts of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

Aside: The Broader Buddhist *Imaginaire*

Despite the lack of correspondence between the clouds of transformation tableaux and the texts that ought to explain them, canonical Buddhist texts—sutras, in particular—provide a broad range of associations for clouds. Because of their difference from what we have seen thus far, these discussions of clouds are worth exploring in some detail. *Definitions* of these celestial bodies, however, are lacking in canonical Buddhist sources. For example, Daoshi's 道世 (?-683) encyclopedic *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (*Forest of Gems of the Garden of the Dharma*), typically a useful source to consult for a medieval Chinese Buddhist perspective on almost any topic of period interest, gives no definition of “cloud” in its short entry on the subject and cites only a few sutras that speak of clouds of various colors.¹¹⁵ Further, many uses of the motif in canonical sources are entirely conventional. Surveying mentions of clouds elsewhere in Daoshi's text, as

¹¹⁵ “Shengyun bu 昇雲部,” in Daoshi 道世 (?-683), *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, fasc. 4, T53, no. 2122, 298a.

well as in Tang and Song Buddhist histories such as monastic biographies and Zhipan's 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275) massive *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (*Comprehensive Record of Buddhas and Patriarchs*), it becomes clear that the same general pattern seen in secular histories obtains: clouds appear in response to, and as evidence of, the emergence of a virtuous person or the completion of a virtuous act. Sutra texts, however, especially those popular in the Tang and Song and copied by compilers of the Water-Land manuals, give a far more vivid picture.

As previously mentioned, among the best-known canonical Buddhist image of clouds is to be found in Chapter Five of the *Lotus Sutra*, “The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs.” Here, the Buddha “appears in the world like a great cloud rising up 出現於世，如大雲起，”¹¹⁶ and his teachings—which appear varied but, in fact, flow from a single source, being adapted to each hearer’s level of spiritual advancement—are likened to “the rain falling from that great cloud upon all the plants and trees, thickets and groves, and medicinal herbs. Each, depending upon its species and nature, receives its full share of moistening and is enabled to sprout and grow 如彼大雲，雨於一切卉木叢林及諸藥草，如其種性，具足蒙潤，各得生長。”¹¹⁷ Such an image seems to evoke the tenth *bhūmi* 地, or stage of the bodhisattva path, which is known as the “Ground of the Dharma Cloud 法雲地”; for, as is summarized in the *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* 金光明最勝王經 (*Sutra of the Most Excellent King of Golden Light*): “The *dharma*kāya is like the sky, and wisdom is like a great cloud: both are able to fill and cover all things. For this reason, the tenth [ground] is called ‘dharma cloud’ 法身如虛空，智慧如大雲，

¹¹⁶ *Miaofa lianhua jing*, fasc. 3, in T9, no. 262, 19b. Translation from *The Lotus Sutra*, 98.

¹¹⁷ *Miaofa lianhua jing*, fasc. 3, in T9, no. 262, 19b. Translation from *The Lotus Sutra*, 99.

皆能遍滿覆一切故，是故第十名為法雲。”¹¹⁸ This image of the all-pervading, beneficent cloud of the Buddha with its rain of compassion and benevolence was repeatedly evoked not only in other sutras¹¹⁹ but also in homilies in manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat.

Perhaps the most vivid cloud imagery in the Chinese Buddhist canon, however, is to be found in the *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 (*Avatamsaka Sutra*), a vast text best-known both for its theorization of non-duality, vividly metaphorized in the image of an infinitude of interpenetrating cosmoses, and for its detailed discussion of the stages of the bodhisattva path. The basis of the Huayan 華嚴 school of Buddhism, this sutra was among the most popular sutras in medieval East Asia, and sections of it were directly incorporated into some manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat.¹²⁰ Clouds appear so ubiquitously in the various translations of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* that one is hard-pressed to cite meaningful examples. Most frequently, clouds are presented as offerings 供養雲 by the myriad bodhisattvas of other realms that come to hear the teachings of the Buddha.¹²¹ The clouds manifested by the bodhisattvas of

¹¹⁸ *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* 金光明最勝王經, translated by Yijing 義淨 (635-713), fasc. 4, in T16, no. 665, 419c.

¹¹⁹ For example, in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, discussed extensively below, this image is often invoked. One *gāthā* tells us that

Vairocana Buddha
can turn the wheel of the true dharma
pervading like a cloud
the myriad lands of the dharma-realm

毘盧遮那佛 能轉正法輪
法界諸國土 如雲悉周遍。

HYJ, fasc. 6, 31a.

¹²⁰ See, for example, CGSL, fasc. 5, 19b-22a. Because the CGSL quotes from the Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (652-710) translation of the sutra in eighty fascicles, all subsequent references in my text are to that translation.

¹²¹ For example, HYJ, fasc. 5, 22a, lists “flower clouds of *maṇi* jewels 摩尼寶華雲,” “wonderfully fragrant clouds of lotuses 蓮華妙香雲,” “treasured perfect-light clouds 寶圓滿光雲,” “burning clouds of the fragrance of infinite

the various realms of the ten directions of the Lotus-Adornment World 華藏莊嚴世界 become the subject of particularly intense descriptive attention—just as the clouds unique to the different states of ancient China fascinated geographers of the period.¹²² The bodhisattvas of the realm to the east manifest clouds of a dazzling diversity. They are said to

each manifest the ten types of clouds of the signs of the bodhisattva body, which fill the sky without dispersing; they then manifest the ten types of brilliant clouds that rain myriad treasure lotuses; then the ten types of clouds of the treasure-peaks of Mt. Sumeru; and the ten types of clouds of the light of the sun wheel; and the ten types of clouds of treasure-flower *yingluo* necklaces; and the ten types of clouds of myriad music; and the ten types of clouds of the incense-powder tree; and the ten types of clouds of myriad material marks of smeared incense and burning incense; and the ten types of clouds of the myriad fragrant trees. These various offering-clouds of the world-sea, which are as numerous as particles of dust, fill the sky without dispersing.

各現十種菩薩身相雲，遍滿虛空而不散滅；復現十種雨一切寶蓮華光明雲，復現十種須彌寶峯雲，復現十種日輪光雲，復現十種寶華[1]瓔珞雲，復現十種一切音樂雲，復現十種末香樹雲，復現十種塗香燒香眾色相雲，復現十種一切香樹雲……如是等世界海微塵數諸供養雲，悉遍虛空而不散滅。¹²³

The clouds manifested by the bodhisattvas of the realms of the other directions are similarly fantastic, and similarly numerous, but rather more stereotyped.¹²⁴ The mind quickly boggles. The overall effect of these descriptions is one of excessive stimulation—stimulation to the point of nearly deadening one’s senses, of ultimately forcing the reader to abandon reliance on the

realms 無邊境界香焰雲,” “brilliant clouds of the *maṇi* wheel of the sun’s storehouse 日藏摩尼輪光明雲,” etc. In the same fascicle, see also a second list of offering-clouds in *ibid.*, 25c.

¹²² See above, 274, n. 60.

¹²³ HYJ, fasc. 6, 27a.

¹²⁴ All of the clouds of the realm to the south are “*maṇi* king clouds 摩尼王雲”; those of the realm to the west, “pavilion clouds 樓閣雲” (these architectural clouds may prefigure the appearance of pavilions among clouds both in descriptions of rebirth in the Western Pure Land and in descriptions of the space occupied by saintly beings during performances of the Water-Land Retreat); those of the northern realm, “tree clouds 樹雲”; those of the northeastern realm, “lion throne clouds 師子座雲”; those of the realm to the southeast, “banner clouds 帳雲”; those of the realm to the southwest, “canopy clouds 蓋雲”; those of the realm to northwest, “perfect light clouds 圓滿光雲”; those of the lower realm, “bright clouds 光明雲”; and those of the upper realm, “light burning clouds 光焰雲.” HYJ, fasc. 6, 27a-28c.

mundane mind and sense organs and to embrace the notion that while provisionally different, all is fundamentally non-dual.¹²⁵

Rather surprisingly, the sutra elsewhere describes the “marks of a great man”—typically understood as the physical features that identify a being as a buddha—as “clouds.”¹²⁶ Rather than simply following the established set of thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks enumerated in early Buddhist sutras, the *Avatamsaka Sutra* instead identifies a total of ninety-seven marks associated with the crown of a buddha’s head 頂, the space between his eyebrows 眉間, his neck 頸, his right hand 右手, his genitalia 陰藏 (specifically, his invaginated penis), and the soles of his feet 足下. In identifying these marks as clouds rather than as bodily features, the text essentially gives the Buddha’s body a celestial or cosmic form. Vairocana, the *dharmakāya*, thus is shown to encompass all of the cosmos’s omni-pervasive ethers. He becomes decorporealized yet made materially manifest in the form of vapors in a manner not unlike what we saw at Qinglong si.

Cumuluous bodies play a particularly prominent role in the *Ru fajie pin* 入法界品 (*Gaṇḍavyūha*), the final section of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. These twenty fascicles describe the pilgrimage of the boy Sudhana 善財童子 to fifty-three “good friends 善知識 (Sanskrit: *kalyāṇamitra*),” spiritually advanced beings of all classes—from bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra 普賢 to seeming commoners such as merchants and prostitutes¹²⁷—who remain in the human world to put the Buddha’s teachings into practice and to aid others in

¹²⁵ Another set of myriad clouds, each associated with a realm in a particular direction, are again enumerated in HYJ, fasc. 60, 320a-322b, as is discussed in greater detail below.

¹²⁶ HYJ, fasc. 48, 251b-255c.

¹²⁷ Interestingly, he also visits monks named “Virtue Cloud 德雲比丘” and “Sea Cloud 海雲比丘.” See HYJ, fasc. 62, 334a-336b.

advancing toward enlightenment. Through his visits to these teachers, Sudhana comes to realize every being's innate buddahood; as such, he became the paragon of the dharma-seeking lay-worshipper, and his tale rose to great popularity among the clergy and laity especially in the Song, when his pilgrimage was visually depicted in a variety of media, most notably in a series of cave shrines, and even pagoda interiors, in sites scattered across Sichuan.¹²⁸

In this section of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, different forms of clouds are again manifested in offering by bodhisattvas of the realms of the ten directions who have assembled to hear Vairocana recount Sudhana's pilgrimage.¹²⁹ An awe-inspiring variety of clouds—ranging from “clouds of the inconceivable heavenly palaces 不思議天宮殿雲” to “clouds of the indescribable rain of adamantine pearls 不可說雨金剛堅固珠雲”—, manifest in the skies above Jetavana, where the Buddha is preaching, spreading in every direction to adorn the scene.¹³⁰ The text then tells us that these clouds are manifested because of the various “inconceivably 不思議” awesome qualities of the Buddha, from the “inconceivable root of goodness of the Tathāgata 如來善根不思議” to the “inconceivable ability of the Tathāgata to universally manifest the eons of formation, abiding, and destruction of all the worlds of the ten directions within a single pore 如來能於一毛孔中普現一切十方世界成、住、壞劫不思議.”¹³¹ In other words, the text seems to follow the

¹²⁸ For introductions to these caves, see Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, “Tōmatsu Sōsho no Kegon to Mikkyō: Angaku sekkutsu wo tegakari toshite 唐末宋初の華嚴と密教—安岳石窟を手がかりとして,” *Kokusai bukkyōgaku daigakuin daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 国際仏教学大学院大学研究紀要 4 (March 2001): 1-19; Hu Wenhe 胡文和, “Sichuan shiku Huayan jing xitong bianxiang de yanjiu 四川石窟華嚴經系統變相的研究,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 no. 1 (1997): 90-95; and *ibid.*, “Dazu, Anyue Songdai Huayan xitong zaoxiang yuanliu he zongjiao yiyi xin tansuo 大足、安岳宋代華嚴系統造像源流和宗教意義新探索,” *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 no. 4 (2009): 47-54.

¹²⁹ HYYJ, fasc. 60, 320a-322b.

¹³⁰ HYYJ, fasc. 60, 320b.

¹³¹ HYYJ, fasc. 60, 320b.

models of the auspicious appearance of clouds that we outlined earlier—that is, inconceivably fantastic clouds manifest in auspicious response to (and as a portent of) the manifestation or presence of an inconceivably great man.

During his journey, Sudhana meets with a “Night Spirit 夜神”¹³² who manifests various “bodily clouds 身雲” and “clouds of bodily transformation (or transformation-body clouds) 化身雲,” which emerge from each pore of his body to pervade the cosmos and preach or guide beings in their pursuit of awakening.¹³³ Indeed, such clouds manifested from bodily pores or particles of dust seem to be a recurrent motif through the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*. This motif serves, perhaps, not only to suggest the supernatural powers of these spiritually advanced beings but also, and more importantly, to indicate that the infinitesimally small and the infinitely large fundamentally partake of the same substance; they are, in other words, non-dual. Such images, developed even more vividly in the section of the *Gaṇḍavyūha* that describes Sudhana’s entry into Maitreya’s Tower 彌勒樓閣, clearly point to the notion that body and cosmos are one, that one’s body can generate infinite cosmoses just as the cosmos can contain infinite bodies.¹³⁴ This is non-duality on a cosmic scale. And it is the cloud that, because it lacks a fixed form, can be molded to serve as a visual link between these incommensurate realms and that can, then, serve as a visual signifier of the concept of non-duality.

At the end of his journey, after he has sufficiently cultivated his various “roots of goodness” and is beginning to enter upper realms of *samādhi*, Sudhana begins to gain various auspicious visions, which at once serve as evidence of the success of his spiritual practice and as

¹³² HYJ, fasc. 69, 372a-378a.

¹³³ HYJ, fasc. 69, 373b ff.

¹³⁴ HYJ, fasc. 79, 434c-439a.

portents of the even more awe-inspiring visions to come. One such vision is that of the “ten types of bright signs 十種光明相,” which, rather than consisting of different types of light, instead consists of different clouds that emerge from every particle of dust to fill the *dharmadhātu*.¹³⁵ Interestingly, some of these clouds—for example, the “clouds of suns, moons, stars, and celestial mansions 日月星宿雲” and the “clouds of the image of the bodily form of all sentient beings 一切眾生身色像雲”—are said to refract the light radiated by Samantabhadra and the Buddha respectively.¹³⁶ This fantastic celestial vision leads Sudhana to fix his mind on attaining a vision of Samantabhadra and the myriad buddhas 一切佛. He does, indeed, immediately attain this vision, and amazingly, he sees every pore of Samantabhadra’s body emitting clouds of even more rarified forms—clouds of *deva* bodies 天身雲 and buddha-lands 佛剎雲, bodhisattva bodies 菩薩身雲 and Samantabhadra’s conduct 普賢菩薩行雲, and ultimately, “clouds of the body of correct awakening 正覺身雲.”¹³⁷

Sudhana’s vision is carried to ever loftier realms by these fantastic clouds, as he visualizes each pore of Samantabhadra’s body as containing whole world-systems unto itself.¹³⁸ With this, Sudhana gains the ten *pāramitās* of wisdom,¹³⁹ and he enters the “gate of the infinite *samādhis* of all Buddha-lands 一切佛剎微塵數三昧門.”¹⁴⁰ This leads Samantabhadra to reveal

¹³⁵ HYJ, fasc. 80, 440a.

¹³⁶ HYJ, fasc. 80, 440a.

¹³⁷ HYJ, fasc. 80, 440a-440c.

¹³⁸ HYJ, fasc. 80, 440c-441a.

¹³⁹ HYJ, fasc. 80, 441a.

¹⁴⁰ HYJ, fasc. 80, 441a.

his purified body 清淨身,¹⁴¹ which again manifests several types of fantastic clouds,¹⁴² and which again contains infinite buddha-realms. Sudhana wanders through these realms, simultaneously seeing that he himself is also part of this cosmic body. With this, he ultimately gains the “sea of the vow of the various practices of Samantabhadra 普賢菩薩諸行願海” and fully understands his fundamental equivalence with Samantabhadra and the myriad buddhas—that is, his body, like theirs, and like anything else’s, is non-dual with the cosmos itself.¹⁴³

In a sense, then, the *Avatamsaka Sutra* can be said to push the celestial logic and protean form of the cloud to their limits. In this text, clouds take forms whose sheer diversity and dazzling inventiveness are to be found in no other text. The repetitive use of the motif, serving so often as fantastic, form-shifting offerings, seems to point to the fundamental disjuncture between “form 實” and “principle 理,” an issue of concern to Buddhists and Confucians alike, and, indeed, a topic of fascination to painting theorists in the late Tang and Song.¹⁴⁴ More importantly to the argument that I will elaborate regarding Song painterly uses of liturgical clouds, the clouds in this text can be seen to serve the structural function of linking the minute with the infinite; emerging from a pore or a particle of dust, they come to fill a cosmos. They bridge seemingly incommensurate scales and realms. In particular, these clouds link the interior of the body—which I will later define as the locus of internal, hidden ritual—with the external cosmos, a realm accessible, visually and otherwise, to all; thus, they suture two seemingly incommensurate spaces in a visual performance of the principle of non-duality. Indeed, it seems

¹⁴¹ HYJ, fasc. 80, 442a.

¹⁴² HYJ, fasc. 80, 442a. These clouds are less numerous than before, though one of them is, interestingly, able to “teach and convert all beings 教化眾生.”

¹⁴³ HYJ, fasc. 80, 442b.

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 2.3 of this dissertation.

to be clouds—which appear at first glance to be present only in their expected role as auspicious portents—that truly launch Sudhana’s ultimate realization of non-duality. The *Avataṃsaka Sutra*, then, is essential to any proper understanding of Buddhist clouds, bridging, as it does, the expected auspicious associations of these cumulous masses with dazzling new uses only imaginable when one takes as one’s focus the content of the cosmos. It is unsurprising, then, that artisans working within the context of the Water-Land Retreat—the most cosmic of Chinese Buddhist liturgies, and one which draws extensively from Huayan thought—should put clouds to similarly stimulating uses.

Mañjuśrī: Between Transformation and Liturgy

During the Tang dynasty, Mañjuśrī, one of the “three Huayan saints 華嚴三聖”¹⁴⁵ and the instigator of Sudhana’s pilgrimage in the cloud-filled *Gaṇḍavyūha*, became the subject of a number of paintings and texts that also were filled with billowing cumuloid bodies. While liturgical manuals generally give us little helpful information about the actual painterly production of images of clouds, paying brief attention to several Mañjuśrī-related ritual writings may provide some important broader context for the development of the cloud-vehicles in Tang transformation tableaux discussed by Hida. Indeed, a general survey of Tang and Song manuals does reveal that cloud-borne figures were frequently specified to be painted in Esoteric icons, especially of Mañjuśrī. Significantly, these cloud-borne figures seem to have been closer in form to those found in Tang transformation tableaux than to the more iconic figures mounted on liturgical clouds that rose to prominence in the ninth century. Other accounts of the deity, however, will take us closer to our goal.

¹⁴⁵ On the development of the visual representations of these deities, see Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, “Kegon sanseizō no keisei 華嚴三聖像の形成,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度学佛教学研究 44, no. 2 (1996): 595-601.

Several similar passages in works attributed to the Central Indian translator Atigupta 阿地瞿多 (act. mid to late seventh century) and the Southern Indian translator Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (d. 727) speak to this early-Tang interest in cloud-borne subsidiary figures and may well have served as models for later texts by translator-ritualists like Amoghavajra 不空金剛 (705-774) and Tianxizai 天息災 (act. late tenth century). For example, the section entitled “Wenshushili pusa fa yin zhou 文殊師利菩薩法印呪” (“Method, Mudra, and Mantra of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva”) in Atigupta’s 654 *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經 (*Sutra of Collected Dhāraṇīs*) describes the proper technique for painting an icon of Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Samantabhadra. After painting the principal deities, Atigupta instructs:

Directly above Mañjuśrī, in the sky, on each side, make a *śuddhāvāsadeva* holding a flower garland in its hands and manifesting only its half body within the clouds in the sky. Below the icon of Mañjuśrī on the right side, paint the receiver of the mantra, with his right knee touching the ground and holding an incense censer in his hands.

正當文殊師利之上。於虛空中兩邊，各作首陀會天，手執華鬘，在空雲內唯現半身。手垂華鬘。於其文殊師利像下右邊，畫作受持呪者，右膝著地手執香鑪。¹⁴⁶

Atigupta’s instructions recall those in a slightly later Mañjuśrī-related ritual manual translated by Bodhiruci, who instructs that after painting Śākyamuni and an extensive entourage,¹⁴⁷

in each of the two corners at the top of this painted icon, paint a heavenly immortal, whose head bears a flower wreath and who, in one hand, holds a flower and, in another, scatters flowers. Half of the body of each is hidden in clouds. Their appearance is upright, and the various seven treasures form an *yingluo* necklace adorning their bodies.

¹⁴⁶ *Tuoluoni ji jing* 陀羅尼集經, translated by Atigupta 阿地瞿多 (act. mid to late seventh century), 654, fasc. 6, in T18, no. 901, 839a. Punctuation altered.

¹⁴⁷ The entourage consists of (on the right) the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, Samantabhadra, Ākāśagarbha 虛空藏菩薩, Akṣayamati 無盡意菩薩, and (on the left) the bodhisattvas Maitreya, Vimalakīrti 無垢稱菩薩, Sarvaṇīvaraṇaviṣkambhin 除一切障菩薩, the boy Candraprabha 月光童子, the bodhisattva Vajragarbha 金剛藏菩薩, and (above Śākyamuni) the Seven Buddhas 七佛. See *Fo shuo Wenshushili fabaozang tuoluoni jing* 佛說文殊師利法寶藏陀羅尼經, translated by Bodhiruci 菩提流志 (d. 727), 710, fasc. 1, in T20, no. 1185A, 794b.

其畫像上兩角，各畫一天仙，頂戴花鬘，各一手執花，一手散花，半身隱於雲中，形貌端正，種種七寶以為瓔珞莊飾其身。¹⁴⁸

The model is quite clear: heavenly beings, borne aloft by clouds, fly above the heads of buddhas and bodhisattvas (especially Mañjuśrī), filling the scene with a sense of celestial auspiciousness. Such a description could apply just as easily to the early- to mid-Tang transformation tableaux at Dunhuang examined by Hida, as well as to a wide variety of Tang stone carvings. The model remained a powerful one into the Song, when Tianxizai, a Northern Indian translator who worked at the Song court in the last decades of the tenth century, made use of it in his translation of the *Dafangguang pusazang Wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經 (*Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*), a twenty-fascicle compendium of Indian Esoteric iconographies and rituals, including a number of Mañjuśrī-related liturgies. For example, to craft the icon for the recitation of the “Miaojixiang liuzi xin zhenyan 妙吉祥六字心真言” (“Six-Syllable Heart Mantra of Mañjuśrī”), after first painting Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Samantabhadra, one then is instructed as follows:

Above [the icons] paint clouds, and in the middle of the clouds, paint heavenly figures who carry garlands and rain flowers in offering. Below, and in front [of the icons], paint the practitioner who is upholding [the mantra] by reciting [it]. His appearance may be as you please, [but] in his hand, he should hold an incense censer, and he should be shown gazing in reverence at Mañjuśrī.

上面畫雲，雲中畫天人，持鬘雨花而作供養。於前下面畫持誦行人，隨自相狀手執香鑪，作瞻仰妙吉祥菩薩相。¹⁴⁹

Even more vivid—and more closely related to the development of the liturgical cloud—, however, are accounts of the Mañjuśrī-inspired experiences of the mid-Tang Pure Land patriarch

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 794b-c.

¹⁴⁹ *Dafangguang pusazang Wenshushili genben yigui jing* 大方廣菩薩藏文殊師利根本儀軌經, translated by Tianxizai 天息災 (act. late 10th century), fasc. 18, in T20, no. 1191, 897b.

Fazhao 法照 (d. ca. 820), who began to see fantastic visions in the mid eighth century that eventually led him to practice on Mount Wutai 五臺山 in Shanxi Province, commonly regarded as the terrestrial dwelling place of Mañjuśrī.¹⁵⁰ Many Song biographical collections include versions of Fazhao's experiences, and in the early twentieth century, a manuscript copy of Fazhao's own account was found among the cache of documents in Mogao Cave 17. This manuscript copy prefigures, albeit tersely, the use of two motifs particularly important in Water-Land liturgical manuals and paintings—namely, the liturgical cloud and the Golden Bridge.

Fazhao recounts:

The instant I spoke the Buddha's name, a certain experience occurred. Suddenly, I was no longer in the hall of the sanctuary but saw only a cloud-terrace of five-colored light that filled the universe about me. Suddenly, I saw a golden bridge, which stretched out before me, directly toward the land of Highest Bliss (Sukhāvatī) in the west.

正念佛時，有一境界。忽不見道場屋舍，唯見五色光明雲臺，彌滿法界。忽見一道金橋，從自面前，徹至西方極樂世界。¹⁵¹

Just as in Water-Land manuals, clouds manifest bearing architectural structures, though the nebulous bodies themselves are not described as bearing deities. That motif, however, would be developed in the intervening centuries and came to be included in Song-dynasty retellings of the experience. The visions become increasingly spectacular, linking the minute and the massive, this world and the next, by means of the cloud. In these later retellings, Fazhao first experiences a vision of Mount Wutai in his porridge bowl and takes a visionary journey through the mountain

¹⁵⁰ The literature on Mount Wutai in English is extensive. For an overview of the Tang and Song literary *imaginaire* of the mountain, including visions of clouds, see Mary Anne Cartelli, "On a Five-Colored Cloud: The Songs of Mount Wutai," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 4 (October-December 2004): 735-757; and idem, *The Five-Colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

¹⁵¹ *Jingtu wuhui nianfo songjing guanxing yi juan zhong · xia* 淨土五會念佛誦經觀行儀卷中 · 下, by Fazhao 法照, ca. 770, fasc. 2, in T85, no. 2827, 1253c. Translation adapted from Daniel Stevenson, "Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai," in *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 221. For an excellent introduction to Fazhao and his visions, see *ibid.*, 203-212.

to a temple, which he and his disciples would eventually construct in reality. He has a similar vision several days later, this time envisioning even more of this mountain that he had yet to visit. Four years later, he, his fellow monks, and the local laity experience a very public vision. This is accompanied by Fazhao's private encounter with a saintly old figure, which serves as the final catalyst to launch his journey to Mount Wutai. In this public vision, however, clouds play a crucial role, serving at once as portents of the auspicious, as supporters of architecture, and as bearers of deities. We are told that

during the early afternoon hours of the first or second day of the sixth month [of 769], a propitious five-colored cloud spread over the entire monastery grounds. Within the cloud, multistoried towers and roofed pavilions appeared. In the pavilions, several dozen Indian monks, each one *zhang* in height, performed ritual circumambulation with mendicants' staffs in their hands. People everywhere throughout Hengzhou and its suburbs saw Amitābha Buddha, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, and their retinue of ten thousand bodhisattvas present in the divine assembly. Their bodies were huge in scale.

及六月初二日未時，五色祥雲，遍覆諸寺。雲中現諸樓閣，閣中有數十梵僧。各長一丈，執錫行道。衡州奉郭，咸見阿彌陀佛及文殊普賢一萬菩薩，俱在此會，其身高大。¹⁵²

The vision is very close to the scenario described so frequently in Water-Land manuals: propitious clouds manifest over a ritual site, and atop those clouds are manifested fantastic buildings that come to be filled with deities. The connection is clear. Clouds have become essential textual motifs. Ultimately, Fazhao's journey concludes with his viewing yet another cloud—this time, a black cloud atop the Eastern Terrace of Mount Wutai, which opens to reveal five-colored lights and a haloed figure of Mañjuśrī within. Light, cloud, and deity have become one.

¹⁵² *Guang qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳, compiled by Yanyi 延一, 1060, fasc. 2, in T51, no. 2099, 1114a. Punctuation altered. Translation adapted from Stevenson, "Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai," 212-213.

A small point of textual history may be worth mentioning. The passage just cited comes from the monk Yanyi's 延一 1060 *Guang qingliang zhuan* 廣清涼傳 (*Expanded Accounts of Mount Clear-and-Cool*), generally considered by scholars to be closest to Fazhao's own account of the events nearly three centuries earlier.¹⁵³ The account is, then, comparatively "mid Tang" in tenor; and perhaps unsurprisingly, clouds appear relatively infrequently—the visions in Fazhao's bowl, for example, simply appear without any sort of contextual imagery—, as is true in the Dunhuang manuscript copy of Fazhao's account, as well. However, if we look at other Song-dynasty retellings of the same events—such as that found in Zanning's 贊寧 (919-1001) *Song Gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (*Song-Dynasty Biographies of Eminent Monks*) of 988—the picture is slightly different.¹⁵⁴ It is a "five-colored cloud 五色雲" that first appears in Fazhao's bowl and that later manifests the form of Mount Wutai.¹⁵⁵ Clouds seem to play a far more prominent role in this account. Though published earlier than Yanyi's version, this account may more fully reflect the burgeoning interest in clouds that was incipient during Fazhao's lifetime but that had developed extensively since the time of Fazhao's death around 820. It is to this burgeoning interest of the ninth century that we now turn.

Autonomous Assemblies?

As we have seen, in texts and transformation tableaux of the centuries prior to the ninth, clouds were always given a supporting role, both literally and figuratively. The cloud-borne ascents and descents of deities are but minor details in period texts; they are but subsidiary

¹⁵³ See the note in Stevenson, "Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai," 205.

¹⁵⁴ *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (919-1001), 988, fasc. 21, in T50, no. 2061, 844a-845b.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 844a.

scenes integrated into the much larger compositions of transformation tableaux that unify narrative imagery with iconic representations of various deities. Cloud-mounted spirits were, in this sense, subordinated to the narrative concerns of the stories depicted in these texts and tableaux. By the mid eighth century, however—approximately coincident with Fazhao’s own account of his visions—cloud-borne assemblies of deities seem to have begun to be given increasing prominence within the spaces of the cave shrines at Dunhuang. Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, the two primary attendant bodhisattvas to the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, together with their individual entourages, were increasingly depicted rushing atop speeding cumulus banks toward the Buddha as he preaches to his assembly. Importantly, these hurrying deities were often depicted in their own independent panels or on their own wall or ceiling faces. In Mogao Cave 31, for example, which dates to the mid eighth century, each of these cloud-borne bodhisattvas, together with his entourage, is given a full slope of the pyramidal ceiling (Figure 2.53). The clouds conveying each entourage are rendered in white pigment enlivened by contour lines of green, reddish-brown, and dark gray, which begin in tapered tails in one corner of the ceiling slope and widen into multi-tufted heads, reminiscent both of earlier clouds in transformation tableaux and of the even larger cloud banks at Qinglong si.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Over the course of the Tang, certain changes in the form of clouds can be observed, as Ma Shichang has explained and illustrated in Ma, 463-465. Sarai Mai 三井舞 has also discussed the formal evolution of Chinese cloud-forms in her excellent essay on the design of the mandorla of the sculpture of Amitābha Buddha at the Byōdō-in 平等院 near Uji 宇治, Japan, crafted by Jōchō 定朝 in 1053 (Figures 2.54 and 2.55). She argues that the cloud patterns in this mandorla adorned with *apsarases* suggest that Jōchō did not merely revive classical styles, as previously thought, but instead combined his study of the past with an interest in contemporary styles imported from the continent. This, she suggests, is revealed by close comparison of the mandorla of Jōchō’s Amitābha with that of the sculpture of Śākyamuni Buddha at Seiryōji 清涼寺 in Kyoto, the origin of whose cloud-patterns she traces in some detail (Figure 2.56). Based on her observation of Chinese tomb murals, metalwork boxes, and stone reliquaries, she shows that cloud patterns underwent a major change in the ninth century. Prior to this, a single cloud-tail often was connected to a mass of three to four heads, which might take a vaguely mountain-like form, giving the overall cloud-form the general appearance of a *lingzhi* 靈芝 fungus. In the ninth century, these multi-headed groups began to separate, each head paired with its own tail, or each head branching off distinctly from a shared tail. Ninth- and tenth-century cloud-forms thus became increasingly wave-like in appearance, as these individual tails undulated to fill the empty spaces they were to decorate. See Sarai Mai 三井舞, “Heian jidai chūki

Filling the whole ceiling slope, each of these nebulous assemblies might be said to begin to take on a certain independence, to become liberated from the more narrative concerns of transformation tableaux, where far smaller groups of deities also moved atop clouds in illustration of stories. Nevertheless, in eighth-century grottoes like Cave 31, these newly enlarged, and seemingly independent, scenes are ultimately subordinated to the larger logic of the cave space, whereby the cloud-driven rushing of these deities serves primarily to direct the worshipper's attention toward the Buddha's preaching assembly on the rear wall of the cave (Figure 2.57). It is this assembly that conceptually anchors the space of the cave and gives it its narrative anchor, for it is the act of preaching depicted here that, in a sense, gives rise to all other tableaux depicted within the same cave-space. Further, it should be noted that the assemblies of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī are not so much descending from a divine realm into the human as circulating within a single realm, going from one saintly space to another. In other words, the genre of the liturgical cloud, while seemingly present here, had yet to come into its own at this time.

Interestingly, in this same era, in the very different space of the tomb, similar such scenes of rushing, cloud-borne spirits became requisite objects for depiction.¹⁵⁷ As Wu Hung and others

ni okeru kōhai ishō no tenkan: Byōdō-in Hōō-dō Amida nyoraizō kōhai ni okeru unmon no seiritsu wo chushin ni 平安時代中期における光背意匠の転換—平等院鳳凰堂阿弥陀如来像光背における雲文の成立を中心に,” *Bijutsushi* 美術史 51, no. 2 (March 2002): 213-231, esp. 223-225. More significantly, Sarai also shows that the mid-Heian rise of interest in clouds can be linked to practices of visualization and image production centered on the accurate reproduction of all of a deity's physical features. Proof of the correctness of one's visualization came to be found in the spontaneous manifestation of clouds. Clouds became evidentiary. The link to the mandorla of the Seiryōji Śākyamuni is clear, according to Sarai: the clouds that surround it on its mandorla serve, in a sense, to verify its authenticity. It is little wonder, then, that clouds should come to be included on the mandorlas of so many images from the mid Heian onward—especially an image like the Byōdōin Amitābha, which is placed within an elaborate scenography that marries garden, architecture, and mural painting to conjure a nearly tangible vision of Amitābha in his Pure Land. Clouds, as ethereal as they might seem, ultimately served to make the visionary concrete. See Sarai, 226-228.

¹⁵⁷ For an overview of the development of Chinese tombs in general, see Wu Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Springs: Understanding Chinese Tombs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010). On these rushing, cloud-borne assemblies, see esp. 211-217.

have recently discussed, beginning in the late sixth century, the long, sloping passageways leading into tombs, especially in northern China, became something like an “‘exhibition space’ outside the tomb chamber” (Figure 2.58).¹⁵⁸ These long tunnels were filled with depictions of vast processions of figures moving outward from the space of the tomb toward the real world, which suggests to Wu that “this *movement* [was] the actual subject of the pictorial representations.”¹⁵⁹ This basic model was elaborated over the following two centuries, when, by the eighth century, the passageway had become what Wu identifies as a “space of ascension,” lifting the *hun* 魂 soul of the deceased to postmortem immortality while the *po* 魄 soul remained bound within the tomb.¹⁶⁰ Importantly, these processions were led by the Green Dragon of the East and the White Tiger of the West, which were first surrounded by wispy, *qi*-like ethers (Figure 2.59), not dissimilar to those surrounding Six Dynasties *apsarases* at Dunhuang, and later supported by increasingly massive and material clouds (Figure 2.60). By the late seventh century, these spirits were separated from the human processions that followed them by tower-like gates, suggesting a division between terrestrial and celestial space and thereby signifying the ultimate ascension of the *hun* away from the tomb.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 211. Though a felicitous phrase, the term “exhibition space” does not seem to account fully for the function of these painted tomb passageways. After all, these spaces were permanently sealed after the completion of funerary rites, rendering them inaccessible to human viewers. Rather than existing solely to be viewed by humans, perhaps these images might instead be thought to have acted upon the deceased’s souls themselves, symbolically separating the *hun* 魂 from the *po* 魄 in a manner not dissimilar to the ways in which Eugene Y. Wang has discussed the Mawangdui tomb furnishings mentioned earlier in this chapter.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 213.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 217.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 214.

The Liturgical Turn

By the ninth and tenth centuries, independent, largely self-sufficient icons of cloud-borne assemblies of deities emerged both among mural paintings in the Dunhuang grottoes and among the portable banner paintings recovered from Mogao Cave 17. In the caves, scenes of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra's rushing toward the Buddha's assembly became ever larger and ever more cloud-filled. For example, in the tenth-century Cave 35 at the Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, located near Anxi 安西 about one hundred kilometers east of Dunhuang, these assemblies fill the entire north and south walls of the cave, respectively (Figure 2.61). All space below the assemblies is saturated with tadpole-shaped clouds, whose forms are outlined in a heavy reddish-brown pigment and some of whose inner tufts are brushed with an intense mineral green. No longer as languid in form as the early- to mid-Tang clouds, the heads of these nebulous masses are often enlivened with small, almost electrifyingly scalloped edges rendered in the white-colored interstitial space between the red and green outlines (Figure 2.62). The north wall of the antechamber of Yulin Cave 16, another Five Dynasties (907-960) construction, similarly is filled with a cloud-borne assembly of the Eight Classes of *Devas* and Dragons 天龍八部 and several bodhisattvas rushing toward the Buddha's assembly (Figure 2.63). Here, the electrified, triple-tufted heads of the cloud-forms supporting the deities along the lower edge of the wall sprout from long, serpentine tails that snake around the wall's right edge to originate in a point along the wall's upper surface. Though perhaps slightly awkward aesthetically, the suggestion that these deities have journeyed from an inconceivably distant land to appear in the cave is clear.

Among the portable paintings, two subjects seem to take precedence: Vaiśravaṇa, Heavenly King of the North, and his entourage either patrolling his domain by cloud or ferrying

deceased souls to be reborn (Figure 2.64),¹⁶² and the Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva 引路菩薩, who, in prefiguration of the later cult of the Amitābha of the “Welcoming Descent 來迎” descends into the human world atop a cloud to retrieve the souls of the newly deceased and to ferry them to be reborn in a Pure Land (Figure 2.65).¹⁶³ Thaumaturges 異僧・聖僧, too, were often depicted atop red clouds in Dunhuang banners (Figure 2.66).¹⁶⁴ The compositions of such paintings differ little from those of the wall-sized assemblies of cloud-borne deities found in contemporaneous grottoes: a long-tailed cloud-form, emerging from an upper corner of the silk, widens as it snakes toward the lower edge of the image, ending in multi-tufted, electrified cloud-heads that support figures as they rush toward one edge of the panel.

Of note, however, are two points, one formalistic and one historical. First, with regard to the color and materiality of the clouds, unlike what we have seen previously, in the majority of such banners, the clouds are rendered with a heavy application of a dark red or reddish-orange pigment, their form defined by a very thin under-drawn outline of black ink. Contour lines within the cloud-bodies are often rendered with a thick white mineral pigment, or simply with bare silk. Second, these works represent the first extant portable images of individual, iconically

¹⁶² There is extensive literature in Chinese, Japanese, and English on representations of Vaiśravaṇa. On Vaiśravaṇa and clouds, in particular, see Wang Yudong, “*Figures en buste in Medieval China: Three Studies*,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007, esp. 1-104. Though dated, the references in Matsumoto Eiichi 松本榮一, *Tonkōga no kenkyū* 燉煌畫の研究 (Tokyo: Tōhō Bunka Gakuin Kenkyūjo and Hatsubaijo Bunkiyūdō Shoten, 1937), vol. 1, 463-472, remain useful.

¹⁶³ On the Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva, see Tsukamoto Zenryū 塚本善隆, “Intro bosatsu shinkō to Jizō jūō shinkō 引路菩薩信仰と地藏十王信仰,” in *Jōdoshū shi • bijutsu hen* 浄土宗史・美術篇, vol. 7 of *Tsukamoto Zenryū chosaku shū* 塚本善隆著作集 (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1975), 317-399. See also the references in Matsumoto, vol. 1, 355-367, esp. 361-367. For a short discussion of the links between this figure and the Water-Land Retreat, see Li Xinmiao 李欣苗, “Pilu si bihua Yinlu pusa yu shuilu hua de guanxi 毘盧寺壁畫引路菩薩與水陸畫的關係,” *Meishu guan cha* 美術觀察 117 (June 2005): 94.

¹⁶⁴ On the figure of the thaumaturge in Chinese Buddhism, see the stimulating discussion in Bernard Faure, *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 96-131.

presented deities descending on clouds. These icons are seemingly self-sufficient, completely divorced from the spatial and story-like concerns that often dominate the decorative schemes of cave-shrines. Although formally related to the cloud-borne deities depicted in transformation tableaux, the figures in these banners have become autonomous objects of devotion in their own right.

The material construction and liturgical nature of these banner paintings is particularly visible in a banner of Avalokiteśvara depicted in the guise of the Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva, now in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums (Figure 2.67).¹⁶⁵ This banner seems to have been left unfinished at the time that it was deposited in Cave 17. The under-drawing of fine lines of black ink is clearly visible throughout the image, the cartouches have been left unfilled, and in some places, the application of pigments seems incomplete. One can clearly see that the painting was produced by first rendering the under-drawing, then applying pigments, and finally reapplying ink outlines over top of the pigments.¹⁶⁶ However, the incomplete nature of the painting belies the complexity of the narrative scenario set up by the image. While the schema of a deity's descending to welcome deceased souls is not uncommon, the unadorned, uninscribed pillar rendered in ink in the upper-left-hand corner of the painting might catch our eye. This pillar takes the form of a *dhāraṇī* pillar; as such, we can expect that it would have been inscribed with a mantra such as “Nanwu Guanshiyin pusa 南無觀世音菩薩” (“Homage to the Bodhisattva

¹⁶⁵ I thank Prof. Eugene Y. Wang for the provocative thoughts that he shared about this image when helping me to prepare to teach it in his survey of Asian art in spring 2011. In particular, I am grateful for his pointing out the *dhāraṇī* pillar to me.

¹⁶⁶ On medieval Chinese painting techniques, see Sarah E. Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), esp. 131-158; and idem, “Formulas of Creativity: Artist’s Sketches and Techniques of Copying at Dunhuang,” *Artibus Asiae* 59, no. 3/4 (2000): 189-224. On wall painting techniques, see esp. Gesterkamp, 201-240.

Avalokiteśvara!’’), an oral phrase meant to activate the protection of the deity.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the painting didactically suggests the ritual procedures that the faithful should employ when gazing upon it. It is, in other words, a self-referentially liturgical image, a genre that seems to have found great favor in Five Dynasties Dunhuang. This period witnessed the large-scale printing of icons of Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vaiśravaṇa, together with abbreviated instructions for the procedures and efficacies of liturgical offerings, all of which were sponsored by the local ruling elite (Figure 2.68).¹⁶⁸

Contemporary evaluations of paintings, while generally indicating little more than the title of the work and, perhaps, some assessment of its quality, nevertheless confirm that the material record at Dunhuang does accurately reflect the rise of liturgical clouds from the late Tang, and especially from the Five Dynasties, onward. The earliest source to mention such an image of a cloud-borne deity is Zhu Jingxuan’s 朱景玄 (fl. mid ninth century) *Tangchao minghua lu* 唐朝名畫錄 (*Record of Famous Painters of the Tang Dynasty*), which records that the mid-Tang painter Zhou Fang 周昉 (ca. 730-ca. 800) painted an image of a *Descending Perfected* 降真圖, presumably a depiction of a Daoist immortal descending from the heavens to earth, most likely amid clouds.¹⁶⁹ Other Tang sources make little mention of, nor even insinuate the existence, of liturgical clouds.

¹⁶⁷ The recitation of the mantra is specifically prescribed in Chapter 25 of the *Lotus Sutra*, “The Universal Gateway of the Bodhisattva Perceiver of the World’s Sounds 觀世音普門品.” See *Miaofa lianhua jing*, fasc. 7, 56c; translated in *The Lotus Sutra*, 300.

¹⁶⁸ The relation between such prints and the caves of the period has recently been treated in Sonya S. Lee, “Repository of Ingenuity: Cave 61 and Artistic Appropriation in Tenth-Century Dunhuang,” *The Art Bulletin* 94, no. 2 (June 2012): 199-225, esp. 217-221.

¹⁶⁹ “Zhu Jingxuan 朱景玄, *Tangchao minghua lu* 唐朝名畫錄, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 164.

Song sources, on the other hand, are far more forthcoming, perhaps largely because such images became far more common in the late ninth and tenth centuries; the accuracy of their attributions to earlier painters is, of course, open to doubt. The late-Northern Song (960-1127) catalogue of the imperial collection, the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (*Catalogue of Paintings of the Xuanhe Era*), mentions several such paintings, attributing icons entitled *Jiangling Wenshu xiang* 降靈文殊像 (*Mañjuśrī Descending*) to the fifth-century painter Lu Tanwei 陸探微 (active mid fifth to early sixth century),¹⁷⁰ the Five Dynasties painter Zhu You 朱繇 (act. early tenth century),¹⁷¹ and the early-Northern Song painter Sun Zhiwei 孫知微 (d. ca. 1020).¹⁷² The catalogue also attributes an icon entitled *Jiangling Puxian xiang* 降靈普賢像 (*Samantabhadra Descending*) to Zhu You, presumably the pair to his icon of Mañjuśrī.¹⁷³ Such paintings likely resembled smaller, hanging-scroll-sized versions of the assemblies of Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī in the mid-eighth- through tenth-century caves at Dunhuang that we surveyed earlier. The *Xuanhe huapu*, together with other Northern Song painting histories such as the *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄 (*Record of Famous Painters of Yizhou*) and the *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞志 (*Annals of Paintings Experienced*), also records the existence of a number of images of Heavenly Kings 天王, especially Vaiśravaṇa, with titles such as *Guohai tianwang xiang* 過海天王像¹⁷⁴ or *Duhai tianwang xiang* 渡海天王像¹⁷⁵ (*Heavenly King Crossing the Sea*) and *Youxing*

¹⁷⁰ *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, 1120, fasc. 1, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 64.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., fasc. 3, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 70.

¹⁷² Ibid., fasc. 4 in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 72.

¹⁷³ Ibid., fasc. 3, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 70.

¹⁷⁴ See, for example, the paintings by Zhao Deqi 趙德齊 (act. late ninth to early tenth century) and Sun Zhiwei 孫知微 mentioned in ibid., fasc. 2, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 67, and ibid., fasc. 4, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 72, respectively.

tianwang tu 游行天王圖 (*Heavenly King on Patrol*),¹⁷⁶ whose content—Vaiśravaṇa and his entourage, borne aloft on clouds, surveying his domain—most likely mirrored that of the Dunhuang banner paintings discussed previously (Figure 2.64).

Besides appearing in paintings and texts thereon, in this period, clouds even began to appear on the bases of pagodas and *dhāraṇī* pillars (Figure 2.69), suggesting the irruption of such seemingly solid, sacred structures into our *Sahā* world 娑婆世界. Too, they envelop stone-carved icons, as well, particularly the images of Vaiśravaṇa so popular throughout Sichuan in the period (Figure 2.70)¹⁷⁷; decidedly solid, bold cloud-circles also convey spirits into the space of certain icons, especially images of the Thousand-Armed Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara 千手千眼觀世音 (Figure 2.71).¹⁷⁸ By the Five Dynasties, clouds are, quite simply and suddenly, everywhere in Chinese Buddhist art. And as these clouds proliferated, so, too, did the pantheons that they conveyed.

The Efflorescence of the Liturgical Cloud

Several Song sources present more loquacious descriptions of cloud-borne icons. Li Zhi's 李廌 (1059-1109) late-Northern Song *Deyu tang huapin* 德隅堂畫品 (*Evaluations of Paintings from the Hall of the Nook of Virtue*), for example, describes an image entitled *Ziwei*

¹⁷⁵ See the painting by Wu Zongyuan 武宗元 (ca. 980-1050) mentioned in *ibid.*, fasc. 4, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 75.

¹⁷⁶ See the paintings by Shi Ke 石恪 (act. mid to late tenth century) and Sun Zhiwei 孫知微 mentioned in *ibid.*, fasc. 7, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 81, and *ibid.*, fasc. 4, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 72, respectively.

¹⁷⁷ On such images, see Wang Yudong, 1-104. A comprehensive iconographic account is given in Thomas Suchan, "The Eternally Flourishing Stronghold: An Iconographic Study of the Buddhist Sculpture of the Fowan and Related Sites at Beishan, Dazu, ca. 892-1155," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2003, 190-214.

¹⁷⁸ A comprehensive iconographic account of these images is given in Suchan, 224-244. For a stimulating discussion of Sichuanese images of this manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, see Hamada Tamami 濱田瑞美, "Tō Sō jidai no Shisen chiiki ni okeru Senshu Kannon shinkō: ōgata daihi hensō kan wo tegakari ni 唐宋時代の四川地域における千手観音信仰: 大型大悲変相龕を手がかりに," in *Bukkyō bijutsu kara mita Shisen chiiki* 仏教美術からみた四川地域 (Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 2007), 269-295.

chaohui tu 紫微朝會圖 (*Audience with the [Great Emperor of] Purple Tenuity*) attributed to the

Later Liang-dynasty (907-923) painter Zhang Tu 張圖 (act. early tenth century) in which

the Emperor [of Purple Tenuity] wears a *gun* robe and holds a *gui* tablet. The Five Stars and Seven Luminaries, the Seven Primes and Four Saints stand in attendance at left and at right. The Spirits of the Twelve Palaces and the Stars of the Twenty-Eight Mansions each occupy their proper places, coming down mounted on clouds.

帝被袞執圭，五星七曜，七元四聖，左右執侍，十二宮神，二十八舍星，各居其次，乘雲來下。¹⁷⁹

The Southern Song (1127-1279) *Hua ji* 畫繼 (*Painting, Continued*) composed by Deng Chun 鄧椿

椿 (act. mid twelfth century) mentions the Song painter Sima Kou's 司馬寇 (act. early twelfth

century) having “often painted the state-assisting Perfected Warrior amid clouds and mists, his half-body revealed. Viewers were awed. Whenever scholar-officials made offerings, there

always were numinous responses 多畫翊聖真武於雲霧中現半身，觀者駭敬，士大夫奉事皆有靈應。”¹⁸⁰

The late-Northern Song Chan 禪 master Huihong 惠洪 (1071-1128), whose collections of prose and poetry constitute a rich corpus of materials for investigating artistic and religious interactions among highly educated Buddhist clergy and art-loving scholar-officials of the period, refers to cloud-borne deities several times in his writings. The title of one poem, for example, mentions a friend's having “painted the appearance of Mañjuśrī among clouds after voyaging north to the Five Peaks and returning to the south 北遊五頂南還畫文殊雲間之相。”¹⁸¹ Another

¹⁷⁹ Li Zhi 李廌, *Deyu tang huapin* 德隅堂畫品, 1098, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 992. A slightly different translation is given in Alexander C. Soper, “A Northern Sung Descriptive Catalogue of Paintings: The Hua P'in of Li Ch'ih,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69, no. 1 (January-March 1949): 27-28.

¹⁸⁰ Deng Chun 鄧椿 (act. mid twelfth century), *Hua ji* 畫繼, fasc. 7, ca. 1168, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 716.

¹⁸¹ Huihong, *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪, fasc. 15, in J23, no. B135, 645c.

poem suggests his having seen paintings of Samantabhadra manifesting among the clouds of Mt. Emei 峨嵋山 in Sichuan Province—considered Samantabhadra’s dwelling place in China—, which corresponded exactly to paintings he had seen in a dream.¹⁸² He mentions, too, icons of the *Fanguang er dashi* 方光二大士 (*Two Masters of Light*)—typically identified as Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha, but identified in Huihong’s text as Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta 大勢至菩薩—, which were supposedly painted by the Liang-dynasty (502-557) master Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (act. early sixth century), in which both deities were depicted seated in *padma-āsana* among clouds 作雲間跏趺之像.¹⁸³

Huihong’s encomia for a set of embroidered icons of the eighteen arhats, entitled “*Xiu Shijia xiang bing shiba luohan zan* 繡釋迦像并十八羅漢贊 (“Encomia for Embroidered Icons of Śākyamuni and the Eighteen Arhats”) provides the most vivid such contemporary textual description of a cloud-filled icon—and, importantly, the iconography there described can be matched to several extant paintings. About the tenth arhat in the embroidered set, Huihong tells us that

Although his hand holds a flywhisk,

¹⁸² The poem begins:

Ten panels of Emei, purple and green and cool;
 What person is this that transcends, emitting [light] from the tip of his hair?
 Suddenly I am surprised at the auspicious colors, and the signs among the clouds,
 which once, in peaceful night, I saw in a dream.

十幅蛾眉紫翠寒 何人逸想發毫端
 忽驚瑞色雲間相 曾向清宵夢裏看

See “Sleeping in the Villa in Front of Mt. Shixiang, I dreamed of worshipping an icon of Samantabhadra, and when I went to the cloister the next day, I saw that the paintings on the walls were as I had dreamed, and thus I made [this poem] 宿石霜山前莊，夢拜普賢像，明日到院，見壁間畫如所夢，有作，” in *ibid.*, fasc. 11, in J23, no. B135, 625b.

¹⁸³ “*Fanguang er dashi zan (bing xu)* 放光二大士贊 (并序)” in *ibid.*, fasc. 18, in J23, no. B135, 661c-662a.

his realm [or “phenomena”] is dustless;
leaving the dream of the Three Poisons,
he mounts a five-colored cloud.
The fruits of frost and dew have ripened,
but compassionately he bears to manifest his body.
Taking the void as ground,
the places where he stands all are true.

手雖有拂，境以無塵
霜露果熟，慈忍現身

出三毒夢，乘五色雲
以空爲地，立處皆真¹⁸⁴

A Southern Song painting by the Ningbo-area artisan Jin Dashou 金大受 (act. mid twelfth century), now in the collection of the Tokyo National Museum, corresponds in important ways to the image that Huihong describes (Figure 2.72).¹⁸⁵ The painting depicts a seated arhat, leaning against a three-footed armrest 三足憑幾, completely surrounded by welling clouds that tower over his luminous green halo; as the poem says, the void is his ground. In front of him, a laywoman presents a flaming jewel in offering. Unlike the poem, the arhat holds a *ruyi* scepter in his right hand rather than the flywhisk, the object that gives Huihong the opportunity to evoke the popular rhetorical trope of questioning why deities that are already pure still make use of flywhisks.¹⁸⁶

The clouds welling around the arhat, suggesting his manifesting before the worshipper’s very eyes, are rendered in a highly evocative manner not seen in extant paintings prior to the Song. The external bounds of the clouds and their internal tufts are all delineated with highly

¹⁸⁴ “Xiu Shijia xiang bing shiba luohan zan 繡釋迦像并十八羅漢贊” in *ibid.*, 661a.

¹⁸⁵ A copy of the Tokyo National Museum work, attributed to the Japanese Muromachi 室町 period (1337-1573), is held in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Figure 2.73). See object 11.4085, listed as item #157, in *Japanese Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston and Tokyo: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Kodansha Ltd., 1998), vol. 1, 23.

¹⁸⁶ The trope extends to bathing, as well. Indeed, the issue of why deities needed to be bathed is often discussed in manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, where the bathing of all beings, both saintly and common, is invariably performed. For an example of one such discussion, see FJSF, fasc. 2, 792a-b.

modulated, C-shaped ink-line segments. Here and there, these outlines are then reinforced with a thin inner line of dense white pigment, and, as we saw at Qinglong si, the centers of some of the spiraling inner cloud-tufts are highlighted with a light mineral green. The body of the clouds is colored with a light covering of mineral white. New, however, is the artist's attempt to give the clouds a distinct sense of depth by surrounding the billowing masses with a dark-gray ink wash to suggest a darkened sky. Further, he has reserved a small band of uncolored silk immediately surrounding the cloud-forms' black outlines, thereby creating a penumbra-like effect that reinforces the sense of the supernatural manifestation of these cumuloid bodies (Figure 2.74). Later artists developed this technique further, periodically brushing several bands of differently colored, light, vegetal washes around the outlines of clouds to give an even greater sense of nebulous depth. This phenomenon can be seen particularly clearly in a Korean Goryeo-dynasty (918-1392) depiction of the *Yuanjue jing* 圓覺經 (*Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*) in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Figures 2.75 and 2.76)¹⁸⁷ and in a Jin-dynasty (1115-1234) depiction of the "Jiu ge 九歌" ("Nine Songs") of the *Chu ci* 楚辭 (*Songs of Chu*) in the same museum (Figure 2.77).

Perhaps the only direct explanation of the meaning of the clouds surrounding Buddhist icons is to be found in the record of a sandalwood sculpture of Guanyin that the early-Northern-Song Tiantai master Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032) commissioned from the Hangzhou sculptor Shen Sanlang 沈三郎 for the Baoyun Monastery 寶雲寺 in Ningbo in 999.¹⁸⁸ Rather exceptionally,

¹⁸⁷ On this work, see Yukio Lippit, "Engaku-kyō hensō zu 圓覺經變相圖," *Kokka* 國華 110, no. 8 (March 2005): 38-39.

¹⁸⁸ The commissioning and consecration of this image are discussed in Stevenson, "Protocols of Power: Tz'u-yün Tsun-shih (964-1032) and Tien-t'ai Lay Buddhist Ritual," in *Buddhism in the Sung*, edited by Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 345-347. For the primary text on this image, see Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), "Dabei Guanyin zhan tan xiang ji bing shi shi yuan wen 大悲觀音旃檀像記并十四願文," 999, in QSW, fasc. 204, vol. 10, 166-172. Zunshi's invitation to Shen Sanlang to carve the image is preserved in

Zunshi gives a complete account of the doctrinal sources of the various visual features of the image; further, he precisely records the procedures by which the image was consecrated—which texts were installed within it, for example, as well as the content of the fourteen vows that he placed within the image. Zunshi tells us that he prepared a pure place according to the *Jinguan zhulei jing* 金棺囑累經; he chose a pure piece of white sandalwood to carve the image in accordance with the *Shiyimian jing* 十一面經; his image was given seven heads and six arms in accordance with *Foding jing* 佛頂經; and in accordance with the *Dabei jing* 大悲經 and the *Zhuobao yinbao jing* 捉寶印寶經, the image held an immortal peach, a lotus flower, a willow branch, and a *kuṇḍikā*.¹⁸⁹ He then goes on to explain the meaning of the sculpture's various visual features, ultimately suggesting that

the body and hands, arms and legs, what is held, what is worn, the flowers and fruits, the pitcher and branch, the crown and jewels, and the silks and jades of the great saintly fragrant image that I have crafted all represent the myriad doors of the dharma [that is, all teachings],

我所造大聖香像，凡身手、臂足、捉持、履載、華果、罐枝、冠纓、繒珮，皆具表一切法門。¹⁹⁰

Thus, if one were to harm this image, one would be harming the teachings themselves. He then tells us that of its seven heads, the largest is that of Guanshiyin's all-knowing cognition 大者觀世音種智也, while the remaining six represent the six *pāramitās* 餘六婆羅密也。¹⁹¹ Further, the

idem, "Qing Hangzhou Shen Sanlang Jingyue diao Dabei xiangxiang shu 請杭州沈三郎淨月雕大悲香像疏," in *ibid.*, 173. The image is specifically linked to Baoyun Monastery in Zongxiao 宗曉 (1151-1214), *Baoyun zhenzu ji* 寶雲振祖集, 1203, in X56, no. 944, 706b.

¹⁸⁹ Zunshi 遵式 (964-1032), "Dabei Guanyin zhantan xiang ji bing shisi yuanwen 大悲觀音旃檀像記并十四願文," 999, in QSW, fasc. 204, vol. 10, 166.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 166.

largest head performs discriminating awareness and controls the other six; consequently, it occupies the center 大首即念覺，總于餘六，乃居中也. The litany continues: the forty-one petals of the lotus blossom that the icon holds signify perfect causes 圓真因; the four peaches indicate the results of permanence and bliss 常樂果. The willow branch signifies wisdom 慧; the *kuṇḍikā*, concentration 定. The image's two feet represent compassion and benevolence 慈悲. The forty-two petals of the lotus flower pedestal beneath those feet represent the "two grounds" of cause and effect 因果二地. Finally, Zunshi tells us of the clouds that surround the image:

The treasure cloud beneath the flowers is a sign of manifesting compassion. Clouds shade and rains shade, expelling heat and eradicating pain. When rain moistens, it gives joy. Thus, [the cloud] has already [come to] abide over the icon, covering and moistening the myriad beings.

華下寶雲者，顯慈悲相也。雲陰而雨陰，除熱拔苦也。雨潤澤，與樂也。故居己像之頂，即所覆澤眾生也。¹⁹²

The interpretation of these clouds that Zunshi provides holds little of surprise. He essentially follows the *Lotus Sutra* in seeing both clouds and rain as all-pervasive signs of the Buddha's compassion. At the very least, however, Zunshi confirms that our attempts to trace the import of the liturgical cloud are on the mark.

Song-Period Maturation

By the Song, then, regardless of the genre of Buddhist image that one examines, one is almost certain of encountering a liturgical cloud. As we have seen, arhats often manifest in front of a billowing cumuloid body that serves to suggest their having crossed from a divine realm into our profane world. The courts of the Ten Kings of Purgatory, too, are often shown surrounded

¹⁹² Ibid.

by clouds, as though indicating the remove of Purgatory from our space (Figure 2.78). Deities that served as popular objects of visualization practices—especially Amitābha and his attendant bodhisattvas—can frequently be found seated in front of blank backgrounds enlivened solely with a bank of clouds signifying the icon’s having been produced through the worshipper’s successful visualization (Figure 2.79).¹⁹³ Meanwhile, the subgenre of images of deities specifically descending on clouds expanded exponentially during the Song. Whereas in the late-Tang and Five Dynasties, the material and textual records both suggest that the genre was limited to images of a relatively small number of deities,¹⁹⁴ in the Song, vast pantheons came to be conveyed on clouds into ritual spaces.

Importantly, all of these images seem to hold some connection to the Water-Land Retreat, as was discussed in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation. The earliest extant sites related to the ritual, such as the late-eleventh-century Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain) in Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, are filled with cloud-like patterns, some subtle—such as the small, tadpole-like cloud-tails barely visible above the heads of Three Bodies of the Buddha

¹⁹³ Though not focusing on the representation of clouds, Ide Seinosuke has provided a useful means of categorizing the types of images in which the forms that I call “liturgical clouds” appear in the Song. Specifically, he speaks of “visualized images,” “apparition images,” and “summoned images.” The first he identifies as icons that are meant to represent the vision of a deity that one attains through meditation—in other words, visions that one attains by temporarily leaving the phenomenal world to engage with “the other shore.” “Apparition images” are icons that depict a deity’s manifestation in the phenomenal world without having been summoned during ritual activity. “Summoned images,” meanwhile, depict deities that descend to dwell temporarily in the phenomenal world after having been invoked during the performance of a liturgy. I would suggest that subtle differences can be detected in the rendering of the clouds employed in each type of image. Visualized images often employ banks of clouds of two different colors, one beneath the deity and one surrounding him; apparition images often make use of cloud-banks that well from below; and summoned images typically use diagonally rendered cumuloid masses that possess a distinct sense of motion. See Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔, “Buddhist Paintings from the Song and the Yuan Dynasties: Visual Representations in the Paintings of Devotional Deities,” *The International Journal of Korean Art and Archaeology* 4 (March 2011): 94–115. I thank Prof. Karen Hwang for bringing this essay to my attention.

¹⁹⁴ Namely, the genre seems to have been limited primarily to images of Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Vaiśravaṇa, and thaumaturges. However, as we saw in several of the Yulin Grottoes, the Eight Classes of *Devas* and Dragons were periodically subsumed within this genre, as well, perhaps suggesting that the material and textual records have given us a rather skewed picture. It may well be that the liturgical cloud had reached a greater degree of maturity in the Five Dynasties than we can verify.

(Figures 1.51 and 1.52)—, others far more visible—such as the deeply carved, swirling bands of cumuloid matter surrounding the figure of the monk Baozhi 寶誌 (418-514), one of the mythical progenitors of the Water-Land Retreat (Figure 1.67). The intent behind these cloud patterns is clear: by enlivening these seemingly static icons with wisps of clouds, ready to appear or disappear at a moment's notice, the sculptors imply that these deities, too, are ready to descend into or ascend away from the ritual space whenever a liturgy is performed. As we also saw in Chapter 1.3, paintings created during the Southern Song—shortly after the initial systematization of the Water-Land Retreat in the late eleventh century—expand the pantheons even further. An assembly of the Three Buddha-Bodies, Amitābha, and Maitreya, together with seven monks representing the seven major sects of Song Buddhism, and forty additional buddhas, descend diagonally amid rather flat, almost escalator-like bands of clouds in a Ningbo-area work now in an American private collection (Figure 1.23)¹⁹⁵; groups of sixteen, eighteen, and even fifty arhats rush toward ritual spaces in a number of paintings now in Japanese and American collections (Figures 1.10); the Ten Kings of Purgatory and Kṣitigarbha take a cloud-borne tour of a Hell-prison in a work in the Hirokawa-dera 弘川寺 collection (Figure 1.26)¹⁹⁶; and beings of the Six Realms of rebirth—including humans led by Emperor Wu of Liang and his monkish adviser Baozhi, the two mythical progenitors of the Water-Land liturgy—descend diagonally

¹⁹⁵ For a full analysis of this painting, see Ide Seinosuke 井出誠之輔, “Shoson kōrin zu,” *Kokka* 國華 113, no. 12 (July 2008): 22-28.

¹⁹⁶ A full account of this painting may be found in Takasu Jun 鷹巣純, “Hirokawa-dera bon Jizō jūō zu to suiriku-ga 弘川寺本地蔵十王図と水陸画,” in *Han Ajia no bukkyō bijutsu* 汎アジアの仏教美術, edited by Miyaji Akira Sensei kentei ronbunshū henshū iinkai 宮治昭先生献呈論文集編集委員会 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2007), 357-378.

amid ink-wash clouds in an important set of hanging scrolls held at Shin Chion-in 新知恩院 in Shiga Prefecture (Figures 1.15 to 1.20).¹⁹⁷

Conclusion: Clouds of Water and Land

The phenomenon is clear: beginning in the mid ninth century, individual icons of deities conveyed by or manifesting in front of clouds suddenly came to occupy a preeminent place in Chinese Buddhist art; by the eleventh century, such works were inescapable. Never before had such images been seen, but once they appeared, almost no liturgical space lacked them. We are forced to question, then, what it was about this period from the mid ninth century onward that led to this dramatic ascendance of clouds in Chinese liturgical art. As we have seen, direct textual evidence for the phenomenon is generally lacking, making the task of explaining this phenomenon rather more speculative. The following few paragraphs are but a tentative toward such an explanation.

To put it simply, I would argue that this tendency emerged in response to the contemporaneous rise and increasing codification of ritual practices that involved summoning vast pantheons of deities into confined ritual spaces, the development of the paragon of which—namely, the Water-Land Retreat—was discussed extensively in Part 1 of this dissertation. In the wake of the one-hundred fifty years of rebellion, invasion, and general societal unrest—from the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion of 755 to 763, through the Huichang 會昌 persecution of Buddhism of 845 to 846, and beyond—that ultimately led to the dissolution of the Tang dynasty, Chinese society in general seems to have experienced an inward turn. Writers increasingly focused on revitalizing ancient forms of prose and poetry, Daoist practitioners seem to have increasingly

¹⁹⁷ For a full account of these paintings, see Takasu Jun 鷹巣純, “Shin Chionin bon rokudō-e no shudai ni tsuite: suiriku-ga toshite no kanosei 新知恩院本六道絵の主題について 一水陸画としての可能性,” *Mikkyō zuzō* 密教図像 18 (December 1999): 69-85.

focused on the practice of “inner (that is, meditative) alchemy 內丹,” and Buddhist worshippers seem to have increasingly turned to deities, such as Avalokiteśvara, Vaiśravaṇa, the Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva, and arhats including Piṇḍola, that could be summoned to actively intervene in our world. Such deities were meant to take active, material form in front of their worshippers; their tangible presence was imperative. That images of these cloud-borne, manifesting or descending deities, paired together with short liturgies to summon them, were printed in such great numbers near Dunhuang in this period seems to suggest that the emergence of the liturgical cloud should, indeed, be tied to these societal phenomena and the religious responses that they inspired.

The continued popularity of the liturgical cloud and, in particular, its rapid spread throughout the empire during the Five Dynasties and early Northern Song are a separate matter. Given that so many later works in the genre of liturgical cloud imagery are indissociable from the Water-Land Retreat, I am inclined to see the rapid spread of this genre of liturgical art as intimately connected to the ritual, as well. Importantly, as I showed in Part 1, it was precisely in the mid ninth century that the Water-Land Retreat began to take shape; the first extant references to performances of it survive in the titles of steles from the Jiangnan region in this period, while abbreviated tenth-century manuals for liturgies that appear to be precursors to the later codified forms of the ritual can be found among the manuscripts recovered from Mogao Cave 17 in Dunhuang. Although earlier Chinese Buddhist rituals, such as the Lotus Samādhi Repentance Ritual 法華三昧懺法,¹⁹⁸ codified in the sixth century, involved similarly cosmic pantheons, the Water-Land Retreat differs from those earlier practices in that its performance seems to have

¹⁹⁸ *Fahua sanmei chan yi* 法華三昧懺儀, compiled by Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), in T46, no. 1941.

always involved the *pictorial representation* of each being (or each of class of beings) summoned to the ritual site.

Of course, this claim remains speculative, as early ritual manuals do not always specify the precise images to be used during a ritual performance. Yet it is clear from other textual sources, such as Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037-1101) famed encomia for paintings used in the ritual, that by the late eleventh century, performances of the ritual routinely made use of sets of paintings depicting sixteen classes of beings "which appear as though they are transforming in the middle of the void 罔罔然於空中也" and that such a practice was considered "ancient" and consequently orthodox.¹⁹⁹ Imperial performances of the ritual in the same period may have involved as many as five hundred painted icons.²⁰⁰ In other words, for the performance of the liturgy to be assured of success, all beings summoned must be visually represented. I have yet to come across any evidence suggesting that such vast pantheons of deities were iconically depicted for the performance of any other rituals before the Water-Land Retreat. Given the open, rather ill-defined liturgical syntax of the Water-Land Retreat throughout much of its history, I wonder, then, whether the ritual might not be defined primarily by its visual and material profile.

Because that visual profile invariably involved the use of liturgical clouds—which served to give the summoned deities a liminally visual presence, poised at the boundary between our world and theirs—, it seems likely that liturgical clouds came to take root across China concurrent with the empire-wide spread of the ritual. While this important motif may not have originated with the ritual, it seems nevertheless that its popularity must be linked to it. One might imagine that early Water-Land practitioners first performed the liturgy with whatever icons they had at hand; only

¹⁹⁹ See Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), "Shuilu faxiang zan 水陸法像贊," in QSW, fasc. 1989, vol. 91, 364-368.

²⁰⁰ See Yu Jing 余靖 (1000-1064), "Dongjing zuojie Yongxing huayan chan yuan ji 東京左街永興華嚴禪院記," 1060, in QSW, fasc. 571, vol. 27, 88.

as the ritual became more systematized—and only as the resonances among the cloud motif found in popular period icons of descending deities, the vivid cumuloid imagery of the new ritual, and the notion of the ritual’s great pantheon of deities “assembling like clouds” came to be recognized—did the liturgical cloud become indissociable from the Water-Land Retreat. Not content with simple images of descent, however, Song artisans quickly began to play with the limits of this genre, as will be discussed in the following pages.

CHAPTER 2.3 | Clouds and Conceptions of Representation in the Song

Introduction

By the Song, then, clouds, both liturgical and otherwise, were everywhere in Chinese art. The discourse on these nebulous bodies necessarily expanded exponentially. As art historians, we might be interested in what artists and their critics had to say about clouds, and in the Tang and Song, landscape painters, in particular, had a great deal to say. After all, as the late-Northern Song academic painters Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1001-1090) and Guo Si 郭思 (act. late eleventh to early twelfth centuries) noted, “A mountain without mists and clouds is like spring without flowers and grasses 山無煙雲，如春無花草.”²⁰¹ A mountain—and by extension, a landscape painting—could never be complete without a properly rendered mantle of these billowing masses. More radically, Mi Fu 米芾 (1051-1107), the Northern Song scholar-official and imperial connoisseur famed both for his depictions of cloudy landscapes and his deep love of fantastic rocks, commonly understood as the “roots of clouds,”²⁰² argued that the truthfulness—and hence, the key to the successful representation—of a landscape lay in a painter’s twin depiction of clouds and rocks, those interdependent depositories of *qi*. In his highly subjective *Hua shi* 畫史 (*History of Painting*), he critiques Li Cheng 李成 (919-967), the great painting master of the Five Dynasties and early Northern Song, by suggesting that his “pale ink [landscapes] are like a dream, wrapped in mist. His rocks are like clouds in motion. There is much skill, but little sense

²⁰¹ Guo Xi 郭熙 (ca. 1001-1090) and Guo Si 郭思 (act. late eleventh to early twelfth centuries), *Linquan gaozhi* 林泉高致, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 500. Indeed, Guo lists clouds—together with waters 水, roads 道路, forests 林木, deep distance 深遠, level distance 平遠, and high distance 高遠—as the essential elements of landscape painting (ibid.), and clouds figure prominently among the various painting subjects, especially springtime subjects, that Guo lists in his text. See ibid., 501.

²⁰² On rocks and clouds, see John Hay, *Kernels of Energy, Bones of Earth: The Rock in Chinese Art* (New York: China House Gallery and China Institute in America, 1985).

of truth 李成淡墨如夢霧中，石如雲動，多巧少真意。”²⁰³ Clouds, then, were not to be trifled with. While the comments of these scholarly painters may not seem to pertain directly to the liturgical clouds that are the focus of our attention, they nevertheless speak to certain interests—specifically, interests in conceptions of representation, an act as mediational as ritual itself—that played out in the realm of religious painting, as well. As such, our close attention to these lofty-minded scholar-officials is warranted.²⁰⁴

Art-Critical Responses to the Painted Cloud

Han Zhuo 韓拙 (act. ca. 1095-1125), another late-Northern Song academic painter and painting theorist, developed a series of extensive reflections on clouds and their modes of depiction in his *Shanshui chun quanji* 山水純全集 (*Complete Collection of the Purity of Landscape [Painting]*), which provides a useful summary of the field of discourse on the subject at that time. His “Lun yun xia yan wu ai lan guang feng yu xue 論雲霞烟霧靄嵐光風雨雪” (“Discussion of Clouds, Haze, Smoke, Mist, Brume, Misty Luminosity, Wind, Rain, and Snow”) covers everything from classical definitions of these nebulous bodies to a precise taxonomy of

²⁰³ Mi Fu 米芾, *Hua shi* 畫史, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 988. Translation adapted from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, compiled and edited by Susan Bush and Hsiao-yen Shih (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985), 231.

²⁰⁴ While some might object to using texts written by such social elites to shed light on the productions of poorly educated artisans, it is important to remember that the paintings crafted by these artisans were never the product of those artisans alone; rather, the artisans relied on models that had been passed down within their studios, consulting with both their direct lay patrons and the monastic advisors to those lay patrons to create works specifically suited to their demands. The artisans’ models, too, are likely to have been produced in close consultation with monastic advisors versed both in doctrinal and iconographic conventions, although as we saw in our investigation of clouds in medieval transformation tableaux, painters often added a great deal of extra-doctrinal, or extra-textual, content to their works. While the artisans did, clearly, possess a certain degree of agency, it might be best to conceptualize the “agent” that produced works of liturgical art as a collective entity comprising multiple individuals, each given a specific task, yet each responding to the needs, demands, and skills of the others. The collective agent behind the production of these religious works thus could be a highly learned one. Moreover, the validity of bringing such elite works into dialogue with artisanal paintings is further confirmed by remembering that, as we saw in the previous chapter, scholar-officials regularly commented on religious painting; and while liturgical works may never have achieved the same cultural status as the loftier genre of landscape painting, certain scholar-officials, such as Su Shi and Li Zhi, devoted a great deal of energy to describing, patronizing, and producing religious icons themselves.

the different types of clouds that appear at different times of year, ultimately concluding with specific instructions about the primacy of monochrome ink in the proper rendering of clouds. Throughout the text, it is clear that for Han the forms of clouds closely reflect the processes that govern the cosmos and that it is the painter's charge to capture those forms and processes as truthfully as possible. Clouds, and their representation, become of cosmic import.

Han begins his reflections on these nebulous bodies with a sentence that sounds strikingly familiar: "Of all the ethers that pervade the mountains and waters, it is clouds that are most important 夫通山川之氣，以雲為總也。"²⁰⁵ Han's concise declaration of the importance of his subject clearly evokes the definition of clouds given in the *Shuowen jiezi*, and repeated in later *collectanea* such as the *Taiping yulan* and the *Yiwen leiju*, as was discussed in detail in the previous chapter. Han's subject, in other words, is one with a classical pedigree. While this brief display of classical knowledge is but a perfunctory nod to the conventions of scholar-official writing at the time, it nevertheless indicates that the various definitions of clouds that we surveyed in Chapter 2.2 were well known to scholars at the time.

Having summarily satisfied the demands of his literary genre, Han then quickly turns his attention toward topics more Song in character. First, he presents an extended morphology of the various seasonal types of clouds, suggesting their intimate connection to the *xiang* 象—the "signs" or "images"—underlying the functioning of the cosmos, the systematic theorization of

²⁰⁵ Han Zhuo 韓拙, "Lun yun xia yan wu ai lan guang feng yu xue 論雲霞烟霧靄嵐光風雨雪," in QSW, fasc. 2973, vol. 138, 98. A slightly different version of the text, entitled "Lun yun xia yan ai lan guang feng yu xue wu 論雲霞烟靄嵐光風雨雪霧," is included in Han Zhuo 韓拙, *Shanshui chun quanji* 山水純全集, in ZGSHQS, vol. 2, 356. All subsequent references are to the former version of the text. A full translation of the essay is given in Robert J. Maeda, *Two Twelfth Century Texts on Chinese Painting: Translations of the Shan-shui ch'un-ch'ian chi* 山水純全集 by Han Cho 韓拙 and *Chapters Nine and Ten of Hua-chi* 畫繼 by Teng Ch'un 鄧椿, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies, no. 8 (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, The University of Michigan, 1970), 26-28, which I have consulted for my own translations. Note that just as he begins his essay with a classical allusion, Han also ends his work with a series of quotations from classical sources, including the *Er ya* 爾雅, *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, and a poem by Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303).

which represents one of the greatest contributions of Song-dynasty scholars to Confucian thought. Han writes: “Clear and bright they [clouds] ascend, manifesting the ethers of the four seasons; dark and gloomy they scatter, following the *xiang* of the four seasons 昇之晴霽則顯其四時之氣，散之陰晦則逐其四時之象.”²⁰⁶ Clouds are, then, directly connected to grand macrocosmic processes. Yet Han brings a more sensitive eye to his subject, pithily describing the fundamental “signs” associated with the clouds of each season. He speaks of both the “bright [or *yang*] clouds 晴雲” and the “dark [or *yin*] clouds 陰雲” of each time of year²⁰⁷ and then connects each type of cloud both to a simple poetic image—“spring clouds 春雲,” for example, are like “white cranes 白鶴,” while “summer clouds are like fantastic peaks 夏雲如奇峰”²⁰⁸—and to a somewhat more involved description—e.g., the crane-like clouds of spring have a “body that is leisured, harmonious, and completely at ease 其體閑逸融和而舒暢也.”²⁰⁹ His taxonomy thus takes on a poetic or painterly tone; one senses the eye of an artist informing the classificatory impulses of a Song scholar fascinated by cosmic processes and their material indexes.

Yet his taxonomic impulses remain unexhausted, and he continues on to categorize clouds of different densities; after all, he tells us, “the substance of clouds does not coalesce and disperse in the same way 然雲之體合散不一焉.”²¹⁰ His vocabulary becomes even more precise, and we learn that when clouds “are light, they become mist; when they are heavy, they become fog; when they float, they become cumuloid; when they scatter, they become vapors 輕而為烟，

²⁰⁶ Han, “Lun yun xia yan,” 98.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 98-99.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 98.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 99.

重而為霧，浮而為靄，散而為氣。”²¹¹ Developing this general taxonomic scheme further, Han enumerates specific subcategories of each type of ether (*qi*), including everything from clouds “exiting valleys 出谷” to “evening haze 莫霞,” common subjects of landscape painting.²¹² An inescapable Song obsession with universal categorization—a phenomenon also reflected in the Water-Land Retreat’s treatment of its vast pantheon of deities, as will be discussed in detail in Part 3 of this dissertation—clearly is at work here.

Han’s primary interest, however, lies in providing instructions for how to properly paint these infinitely changeable and decidedly cosmic atmospheric bodies. For him, clouds are no less important than for Guo Xi and Guo Si; indeed, he tells us that “in all paintings, one differentiates [among] climatic [conditions], [but] chief among these is distinguishing clouds and mist 凡畫者分氣候，別雲烟為先。”²¹³ The effect of light filtering and refracting among clouds and mountains is the essence of landscape painting according to Han, and it is the landscape painter’s charge to bring his rendering of these effects into concordance with the cosmic patterns underlying them. He argues:

The *qi* of clouds, haze, mist, fog, and brume makes up the misty luminosity of a mountain’s appearance, the adornment of distant peaks and trees. Those who excel at painting these capture the true spirit (*qi*) of the four seasons, the wonderful principles (*li*) of creation. Thus, one must not ignore the effects of misty luminosity but should instead follow its natural laws.

凡雲霞烟霧靄之氣，為嵐光山色，遙岑遠樹之彩也，善繪於此者，則得四時之真氣，造化之妙理，故不可逆其嵐光，而當順其物理也。²¹⁴

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid. Translation closely based on Maeda, 27.

Importantly—both for the history of landscape painting, and, indirectly, for our discussion of the liturgical cloud—monochrome ink (and perhaps light vegetal colors) was, for Han, the only medium in which these effects could be properly achieved. His prescription is clear: “As for what is used in landscapes, for hazes one should not heavily [apply] cinnabar and malachite, and for clouds one should not use colored painting, lest one lose the natural spirit (*qi*) of the misty luminosity 山水中所用者，霞不重以丹青，雲不施以彩繪，恐失其嵐光野色自然之氣也。”²¹⁵ Ultimately, then, the rendering of atmospheric effects in monochrome ink constitutes the essence of landscape painting. It is this that puts the painter and his work into dialogue with the cosmos. Thus, Han concludes his essay with an incisive rhetorical question linking painting, clouds, and cosmos: “In painting, how can one not go deeply into probing the profundities of Heaven and Earth and investigating the effects of wind and snow? 然在畫者窮天地之奧，掃風雪之候，曷可不深究焉。”²¹⁶ To be a true landscape painter, one must investigate cosmic processes, and one must ensure that one’s paintings capture them properly. For this, only monochrome ink will suffice.

Clouds and the Definition of the Painter’s Craft

Apart from his obsession with universal categorization, Han’s more general prescriptions about the primacy of the ink medium in rendering clouds largely follow earlier examples. Painting theorists of previous generations had taken a similar interest in the depiction of atmospheric effects with monochrome ink, creating a model developed more fully by Song artists and writers such as Han and the Guos. Most notably, the famed late-Tang painting critic Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (815-907?), whose views on art essentially defined the field of discourse

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

on scholar-official painting for the following millennium, begins his “Lun huagong yong ta xie 論畫工用拓寫” (“On Painting Materials, Tracing, and Copying”) by remarking,

Grasses and trees spread forth their glory without depending upon cinnabar and azurite; clouds and snow whirl and float aloft, white without need of ceruse. Mountains are green without needing malachite, and the phoenix is iridescent without the aid of the five colors. For this reason, if the five colors are all present in one’s management of ink [alone], one may be said to have fulfilled one’s aim. If one’s mind dwells on the five colors, then the images of things will be improper.

草木敷榮，不待丹雘之采；雲雪飄揚，不待鉛粉而白。山不待空青而翠，鳳不待五色而彩。是故運墨而五色具，謂之得意。意在五色，則物象乖矣。²¹⁷

Mineral color, then, was to be banished from true painting, which could only consist of monochrome ink.

This point has, of course, been long recognized in scholarship on Chinese painting. Less widely remarked, however, is a comment that concerns the proper rendering of clouds—in particular, reconciling the depiction of these cumuloid bodies with correct painterly technique—included later in Zhang’s essay. Indeed, these nebulous masses presented a distinct problem to Zhang, a problem that gets to the heart of how painting itself was to be defined. Zhang recounts that

there was a clever painter who said of himself that he could paint cloud vapors. I said to him: “The ancients never reached such ultimate subtlety in their painting of clouds. If one moistens silk, dotting and filling in here and there with a light powder blown from the mouth, this is known as blown clouds. This is in accord with the principles of Heaven, but although it may be called a subtle solution, one cannot see the brush strokes in it, and therefore, it cannot be called painting. It is comparable to the splashed ink [technique] of landscape painters, which also cannot be called painting as it is not suitable for copying.”

有好手畫人，自言能畫雲氣。余調門：古人畫雲，未為臻妙。若能沾濕綃素，點綴輕粉，縱口吹之，謂之吹雲。此得天理，雖曰妙解，不見筆蹤，故不謂之畫。如山家水家有潑墨，亦不謂之畫，不堪仿效。²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (815-907?), *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記, fasc. 2, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 126-127. Translation adapted from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 62-63.

This passage points to an essential issue at the center of all Chinese painting. On the one hand, Zhang notes that there exists a technique for rendering clouds that engages in close dialogue with the cosmic processes by which natural clouds are created: one blows particles of pigment onto a moistened silk ground, where the pigment collects into a visible form, just as *qi* itself, propelled by winds as it rises heavenward from mountains and rivers, condenses into physical clouds. There is something of the magical in this; the artist conjures clouds just as the cosmos itself might. On the other hand, Zhang points out that such a technique does not make use of a brush and leaves no traces of human artifice. Thus, even though—or, perhaps, *because*—the technique so closely imitates heavenly creation, the technique cannot be considered painting and, consequently, finds no rightful place in Zhang’s history of famed painters. In essence, Zhang is limiting the definition of true painting to the rendering of images of objects in monochrome ink applied by brush in such a manner that the process of the creation of the work is fully visible. Rearticulated in semiotic terms, Zhang is demanding that painting unify icon, index, and (to a certain extent) symbol—that each brushstroke simultaneously picture an object, point to the brush (and hand, and subject) that created it, and employ ink in such a way that its hues merely allude to color. Any work that lacks the essential quality of the indexicality of the hand can no longer be seen as painting—and, certainly, any work that relies on the iconic color of mineral pigments cannot be seen as worthy of aesthetic contemplation. Zhang thus excludes from his history of painting all works of art that are imbued with a sense of magical conjuration, works of a type that may very well have been the medieval mainstream, but that generations of narrow-minded literati critics have obscured from our view.

²¹⁸ Zhang Yanyuan, *Lidai minghua ji*, fasc. 2, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 127. Translation adapted from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 63.

Moreover, the fact that Zhang fixes his attention on clouds as opposed to any other element of landscape painting, transforming them into a locus for contention over the definition of painting itself, seems significant. In making clouds created in a heavenly, though non-painterly, manner into an object of near-opprobrium, Zhang gives these cumuloid bodies that mediate between Heaven and earth an appropriately liminal status, poised on the boundary between the painted and the non-painted. One's manner of rendering clouds can, in effect, guarantee or contradict the success of one's whole painterly enterprise. In this respect, Zhang's account brings to mind Hubert Damisch's discussion of the status of clouds in a very different art-historical context—namely, Western painting of the Renaissance onward.²¹⁹

In this text, the only sustained historical and theoretical account of clouds in art historical scholarship, Damisch theorizes the role of this motif as that which simultaneously completes and contradicts the entire system of Western linear-perspectival painting. To do so, Damisch begins by recounting the well-known story of Filippo Brunelleschi's (1377-1446) early attempt to create an ideal single-point perspective painting with the help of an ingenious viewing device.²²⁰ This device allowed one to gaze from the reverse of a painted canvas through a hole placed exactly at the single vanishing point of the composition. One then observed the reflection of the painting in a mirror. The buildings, figures, and landscapes rendered in the painting would, then, appear to the viewer in perfect geometrical perspective. In seeming acknowledgement of the impossibility

²¹⁹ Hubert Damisch, *A Theory of /cloud/: Toward a History of Painting*, translated by Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Damisch discusses clouds in Chinese painting in *ibid.*, 200-225, including Zhang Yanyuan's comments, cited in *ibid.*, 205. While completely ahistorical, freely mixing comments taken from Zhang Yanyuan's work and the late-seventeenth-century *Jiezi yuan huapu* 芥子園畫譜 (*Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting*) in the same paragraph, Damisch nevertheless provides particularly compelling thoughts on the semiology of Chinese painting. Rosalind Krauss includes an eloquent summary of Damisch's arguments in an essay on the painter Agnes Martin. See Rosalind E. Krauss, "Agnes Martin: The /Cloud/," *Bachelors* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1999), 82-85.

²²⁰ See Damisch, 121-124.

of subjecting clouds to the laws of linear perspective—which, as Damisch describes, “only needs to ‘know’ things that it can reduce to its own order, things that occupy a place and the contour of which can be defined by lines”²²¹—, Brunelleschi left the sky of his painting blank, covering it instead with mirror-like silver leaf that would reflect the sky itself. In doing so, “he resorted to a subterfuge that introduces into the representational circuit a direct reference to external reality, and at the same time a supplementary reduplication of the specular structure upon which the experiment was founded.”²²² It was precisely this direct reference to external reality, and to the processes of heavenly creation itself, that Zhang, in his far different historical and cultural context, sought to banish from painting, insisting instead that painting must remain an act of both representation and painterly self-inscription. For Zhang, direct reference to external reality—and specifically, to the cosmic processes of creation—ultimately constituted something akin to magic, which was to be excluded from his highly intellectualized conception of painting.

Brunelleschi’s incorporation of cumuloid external reality into his representational scheme allows Damisch to propose that clouds have perpetually played a dialectical role in Western painting since the Renaissance. According to Renaissance theories of perspective, the cloud is essentially impossible to depict, for neither can the surface of a cloud be measured nor can its boundaries be delineated. Consequently, painters were forced to use the problem of the cloud as an impetus to develop other models of representation (or presentation). For Damisch, as for Zhang Yanyuan, the cloud thus occupies an ambivalent place within the enterprise of painting itself, a linchpin whose slightest movement might dismantle the whole schema. One must tread very lightly around these delicate, billowing bodies.

²²¹ Damisch, 124.

²²² Damisch, 123.

Principle and Form, Constancy and Inconstancy

Ultimately, it is these very qualities of the instability and liminality of the cloud that fascinate both artist and viewer, and intriguingly, the issue of instability or inconstancy seems to have particularly preoccupied Song writers and painting critics. The late-Southern Song poet Chen Zhu 陳著 (1214-1297), for example, likened the inconstancy of clouds to the changeability of people's minds. In his "Hu Guichang Yunqi shuo 胡貴常雲寄說" ("Account of Hu Guichang's [Studio Name] Yunqi"), a discussion of the origin and meaning of a fellow literateur's *nom de plume*, Chen writes that "all of the things between Heaven and Earth have constancy [or normalcy]; only clouds transform into infinite forms. The minds of men are thus, as well. 天地間物皆有常，惟雲變化萬狀，而人之心亦然."²²³ Meanwhile, in his "Ba Lin shi Ruiyun shan tu 跋林氏瑞雲山圖" ("Colophon to Mr. Lin's *Auspicious Clouds and Mountains*"), the poet and critic Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269) gives a surprising twist to the notion of constancy, defining clouds' very changeability as their own form of normalcy; indeed, he tells us that "to blow forth and gather is what is normal [or constant] for clouds; for there to be clouds without blowing is not normal [or inconstant] 噓而族，雲之常也；不噓而雲，非常也." Yet, he continues, "that which is not normal [or inconstant] is auspicious 非常者為瑞."²²⁴ Clouds' deviations from their normal state of changeability thus come to constitute portents worthy of study. To capture that inconstant state in the seemingly fixed medium of ink on silk or paper becomes the goal of a particular type of auspicious—that is, magically efficacious—landscape painting.

²²³ Chen Zhu 陳著 (1214-1297), "Hu Guichang Yunqi shuo 胡貴常雲寄說," in QSW, fasc. 8113, vol. 351, 73.

²²⁴ Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269), "Ba Lin shi Ruiyun shan tu 跋林氏瑞雲山圖," in QSW, fasc. 7574, vol. 329, 229.

Although clouds would seem to provide the ideal object for such reflections, within the field of middle-imperial Chinese painting criticism, discourse on the notions of constancy and inconstancy, form and principle, was most fully developed in discussions of water 水 and fire 火, and ghosts 鬼 and spirits 神. These discussions ultimately centered upon defining the limits of pictorial representation. Li Zhi's description of an icon of a buddha by the late-Tang artist Zhang Nanben 張南本 (act. late ninth century), famed for his hanging scrolls of deities invoked during the Water-Land Retreat,²²⁵ clearly indicates the terms of the debate; further, it gives a vivid account of the wondrous visual effect of static paintings that managed to fully capture that which lacks constant form. He writes:

The average professional painter is capable only of depicting the fixed forms of things; thus, with regard to the shapes of water and fire, it is difficult for him to exhaust their transformations. At first, Zhang Nanben and Sun Wei 孫位 [act. late ninth century] studied the painting of water together, and both mastered its methods. Nanben believed that being equally capable was inferior to being singularly superior; thereafter, he concentrated on painting fire and alone captured its wonders. [This painting of] a *pratyekabuddha* that has been passed down to us today is seated in *padma-āsana*, with fire surrounding his body. The vitality of the brushwork is sharp like flames and has captured the essential character of fire. To viewers, awestruck before the soaring smoke and shattering lightning, the effect is that of mountains burning and prairies in flames. By the power of meditation and wisdom, the Buddha sits in the middle, unmoved; for how could his mind be disturbed by such trifling concerns?

世之畫史，但能寫物之定形，故水火之狀，難盡其變。始，張南本與孫位並學畫水，皆得其法。南本以為同能不如獨勝，遂專意畫火，獨得其妙。世傳辟支佛結跏趺坐，火周其身，筆氣焱銳，得火之性。觀之者以煙飛電掣，烈然有焚山燎原之勢。佛以定慧力坐其間，安然不動，則毛末小利害足以動其心乎？²²⁶

For Li, and the many others in the period who commented on the fire and water works of Zhang Nanben and Sun Wei, a great painter was defined by his ability to represent what should, by

²²⁵ See Huang Xiufu 黃休復 (act. early eleventh century), *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄, fasc. 1, dated 1001, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 191.

²²⁶ Li Zhi, "Hufo xiang 火佛像," *Deyu tang hua pin*, in ZGSHQS, vol. 1, 992. Translation adapted from Soper, "A Northern Sung Descriptive Catalogue of Paintings," 20-21.

virtue of its inconstancy, be unrepresentable. To capture the essence of the inconstant by means of brush and ink was to create an unequaled aesthetic experience. And it was precisely this—to step beyond the seeming conceptual limits of painting, while still confining oneself to its media—that became the goal of scholar-official painters in the period.

Su Shi, the learned driving force behind this movement, commented pithily on the subject, ultimately prescribing that one must seek to capture in painting the constant principles that underlie inconstant form. In an essay on paintings brushed by his friend Wen Tong 文同 (1019-1079) in the abbot's quarters 方丈 of the Jingyin Cloister 淨因院, he develops these notions very explicitly, suggesting that only the lofty scholar-official is capable of recognizing the correct principle inhering in an object, let alone rendering it in ink. He writes:

Once when I discussed painting, I said that men and animals, buildings and utensils, all have constant forms; as for mountains, trees, water, and clouds, although they lack constant forms, they have constant principles. If constant form is lost, everyone knows it; when constant principle is improper, even those who understand painting may not realize it. Therefore, all those who are able to deceive the world for the sake of a reputation necessarily make use of that which lacks constant form. Though the loss of constant form stops with what is lost and does not spoil the whole, if constant principle is improper, then all is lost. When the form is inconstant, one must take care about its principle. The artisans of the world may be able to create the forms perfectly, but when it comes to the principle, unless one is a lofty man of outstanding talent, one cannot distinguish it.

余嘗論畫，以為人禽宮室器用皆有常形。至於山石竹木，水波煙雲，雖無常形，而有常理。常形之失，人皆知之。常理之不當，雖曉畫者有不知。故凡可以欺世而取名者，必託於無常形者也。雖然，常形之失，止於所失，而不能病其全，若常理之不當，則舉廢之矣。以其形之無常，是以前理不可不謹也。世之工人，或能曲盡其形，而至於其理，非高人逸才不能辨。²²⁷

Su, then, is advocating a form of painting that pushes beyond the visible to capture the invisible principle or essence that lies hidden to all except the brilliant scholar. The visual is thus

²²⁷ Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), “Jingyin yuan hua ji 淨因院畫記,” SSWJ, fasc. 11, vol. 2, 367. Translation adapted from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 220.

subordinated to the non-visual, which, ironically, must ultimately be given visual form through the use of a brush, ink, and paper or silk. That hidden interior must be made, in a sense, accessible, while still avoiding the trap of superficial verisimilitude.

This discussion of form and principle, the visible and the invisible, the constant and the inconstant, also took a supernatural or religious turn among certain painting commentators. Several critics reopened an ancient debate over the ease or difficulty of depicting ghosts and spirits, a topic first treated in the third-century-BCE *Han Feizi* 韓非子. In this text, Han Fei (ca. 281-233 BCE) tells the following story about a painter's visit to the court of the King of Qi 齊王:

A traveler was painting for the King of Qi. The King of Qi asked him: "What is most difficult to paint?" He said: "Dogs and horses are most difficult." "What is the easiest?" He said: "Ghosts and demons are easiest. Dogs and horses are what people know; at dawn and dusk, they appear in front of them. One cannot distort them. Thus, they are difficult. Ghosts and demons lack form, and they do not appear in front of us. Thus, they are easy."

客有為齊王畫者，齊王問曰：「畫孰最難者？」曰：「犬馬最難。」「孰最易者？」曰：「鬼魅最易。夫犬馬、人所知也，旦暮罄於前，不可類之，故難。鬼魅、無形者，不罄於前，故易之也。」²²⁸

Precisely because ghosts and demons lack a constant form, they are, consequently, ostensibly easy to depict. The painter can invent at will without worrying about verisimilitude. Song critics, however, took exception to this ancient argument, suggesting that, in fact, ghosts' lack of fixed, knowable form still posed challenges. The critic Dong You 董道 (act. early twelfth century), who lived through the transition between the Northern and Southern Song periods, composed a

²²⁸ Han Fei 韓非 (ca. 281-233BCE), "Wai chu shuo zuo shang 外儲說左上," chap. 32 in *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (reprinted as *Han Feizi ji shi* 韓非子集釋), fasc. 11, annotated by Chen Qiyu 陳奇猷 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958), 633; HJDZ edition. Translated after consulting Wenkui Liao, *The Complete Works of Han Fei Tzu: A Classic of Chinese Legalism* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1959), vol. 2. On the conception of the representation of ghosts in early China, see Mu-chou Poo, "The Concept of Ghost in Ancient Chinese Religion," in *Religion and Chinese Society*, edited by John Lagerwey (Hong Kong and Paris: The Chinese University Press and Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 2004), vol. 1, 173-192.

rather extended commentary in support of Han Fei's position, first paraphrasing the earlier text and then appending his own thoughts. He writes:

How can it be that what man knows easily is then difficult to paint, while what man knows with difficulty is then easy to paint? The belief is that dogs and horses are easy to investigate, while ghosts and spirits are difficult to know. Those in the world who discuss matters of principle should know that ghosts and spirits are no different from people, while even though one achieves verisimilitude, the shapes of dogs and horses cannot be said to be skillfully [rendered] unless one exhausts their principles. But those under Heaven who see principles are few. Who, then, should discuss these matters with painters and investigate what is proper? Thus, if one should meet a person who understands principles, he will say that with regard to demons and deities, one should seek principle, and not formal likeness; while in rendering dogs and horses, though one should seek formal likeness, one should also seek their principles. Therefore, skill in dogs and horses is usually difficult.

豈以人易知故畫難，人難知故畫易邪。狗馬信易察，鬼神信難知。世有論理者，當知鬼神不異於人，而犬馬之狀，雖得形似而不盡其理者，未可謂工也。然天下見理者少。孰當與畫者論而索當哉。故遇知理者，則鬼神索於理不索於形似，為犬馬則既索於形似復求於理。則犬馬之工常難。²²⁹

Dong You thus broadens the bounds of Han Fei's argument, introducing the concept of principle to the well-trodden discursive field of verisimilitude and its difficulties. For Dong, the fact that one must capture both formal likeness and non-visual principle when rendering a real-world object of perception thus makes them infinitely more difficult to paint than gods or ghosts invisible to the human eye (though identical in principle to human beings). While the constancy or inconstancy of a particular object's form may still pose challenges to the artist, ultimately, he must strive to capture principle, as well.

Writing several decades earlier, the great Northern Song statesman and writer Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), however, presented a stimulating counterargument to the position

²²⁹ Dong You 董道 (act. early twelfth century), "Hua quan xi tu 畫犬戲圖," *Guangchuan hua ba* 廣川畫跋, fasc. 2, in ZGSHQS, vol.1, 822. Translation adapted from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 221-222.

adopted by Han Fei and later expanded by Dong You.²³⁰ This compelling position, while articulated in seeming promotion of the standards of what would later become “literati painting 文人畫,” speaks brilliantly to interests that, as I will show, can also be detected in liturgical artworks of the period. After all, as I suggested in the Introduction to this dissertation, the Song was characterized by twin impulses toward the rational and the irrational, and certain thinkers—in particular, Ouyang Xiu—seem to have been very interested not just in living with that tension but also in actively reflecting on and seeking to resolve it. Ouyang proposes:

Those who excel at discussing painting often say that is easy to be skillful in [rendering] ghosts and spirits, for in painting, formal likeness is difficult, and people do not see ghosts and spirits. However, [to depict] their *yin* aspect—so terribly dismal, transforming and churning, and exceedingly strange—, such that it fills one with supreme fright upon viewing, yet such that when one has calmed and can look with attention, one then [sees that] the innumerable shapes and attitudes are of simple brushwork yet complete in conception—is this not also difficult?

善言畫者多云鬼神易為工，以謂畫以形似為難，鬼神人不見也。然至其陰威慘淡，變化超騰，而窮奇極怪，使人見輒驚絕，及徐而定視，則千狀萬態，筆簡而意足，是不亦為難哉？²³¹

In other words, for Ouyang it was not the issue of verisimilitude that determined the ease or difficulty of rendering a subject such as ghosts and spirits; rather, the difficulty lay in creating a sense of their irruption into the human world—a sense of their transgressing ontological boundaries by bridging representation and reality—solely through the medium of ink painting. Moreover, it remained imperative that the iconicity of the image and the indexicality of the painter’s brushmarks stand in perfect tension, thereby creating a second dialectic between the

²³⁰ Su Shi, Huihong, and Liu Kezhuang also commented on the ease or difficulty of rendering gods, ghosts, dogs, and horses, each twisting their comments to make rather different rhetorical points. See Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), “Ba Neijiao boshi *Shuimo tianlong babu tujian* 跋內教博士水墨天龍八部圖卷,” in SSWJ, vol. 6, 2572; Huihong 惠洪 (1070-1128), “Ba *Bai niu tu* 跋百牛圖,” in QSW, fasc. 3020, vol. 140, 199; and Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (1187-1269), “Ba Longmian hua si tianwang 跋龍眠畫四天王,” in QSW, fasc. 7585, vol. 329, 405.

²³¹ Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072), “Ti Xue Gongqi hua (Jiayou ba nian [1063]) 題薛公期畫 (嘉祐八年),” in QSW, fasc. 718, vol. 34, 87. Translation adapted from *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, 224.

representational and the real. For Ouyang Xiu, it was precisely in painting that the rational and irrational could come together. Ghosts and gods, fire and water, and mists and clouds were thus bound together within a complex discursive field that ultimately speaks of a Song obsession with determining the limits of representation, reality, and being.

A Return to the Liturgical: Inverting Narratives in Bei shan Niche 253

The question that remains, then, is how such lofty discourse on constancy and inconstancy, form and principle, and the liminality of representation played out among the artisans of the liturgical artworks that are the focus of our attention. To conclude this study of liturgical clouds, I would like to present two case studies that speak to the sophistication with which the much-maligned professional artists that created these works adapted these discourses to their own needs. It will quickly become apparent that certain Song professional artists were far from worthy of the scorn heaped upon them by lofty-minded scholar-officials. Indeed, artisans working in both sculpture and painting took rather surprising approaches to the liturgical cloud, the icon, and the conventions of supramundane representation, crafting works that articulate in visual and material idioms many of the concepts that Ouyang Xiu proposed in his text. Ultimately, I would like to suggest that it was these artisans'—or their patrons' and advisors'—inherent interest in ritual, an eminently mediational act, that may well have allowed them to create such conceptually sophisticated works.

A group of carvers working in Dazu County at the turn of tenth century made particularly novel, and almost subversive, use of the cloud motif, as we can see in Niche 253 at Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), which was likely carved in the mid tenth century, painted in 994, and completed in 1001, an occasion celebrated with a performance of the Water-Land Retreat (Figure

1.27).²³² In Chapter 1.3, we saw that at first glance, the iconography of the niche appears relatively straightforward: Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha—bodhisattvas revered for their salvific powers and, in particular, for the succor that they might bring to souls wandering through the Ten Courts of Purgatory—stand at center.²³³ Above the two figures floats a jeweled canopy, in front of which fly two *aspsarases* (Figure 1.28). And on each side wall of the niche are carved—again in relatively high relief—six circular, figure-filled bands of clouds, the tails of which are depicted rising upward, thus implying that these figures are flying down into the space of the niche (Figures 1.29 and 1.30). The cumuloid bodies conveying these figures are rendered as almost palmette-like forms, the outermost bands curling back upon themselves into a spiral; the tails, meanwhile, consist of five flowing bands, and at the time of their last repainting, these bands were, indeed, painted with the five auspicious colors (Figure 2.80). The arrival of these figures, whom we can identify both by inscriptional and iconographic evidence as the Ten Kings of Purgatory, is a portentous occasion. Ultimately, the niche seems to suggest, then, that the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha, who eternally dwell in our world, can assure easy passage through judgment in the courts of the Kings of Purgatory and can, by extension, assure one’s rebirth into a higher path of existence. Thus, the link between Niche 253 and the Water-Land Retreat is not to be understood through an investigation of ritual function, but rather it is to be found at a more conceptual level—specifically, in their shared insistence upon the possibility of a spirit’s being ferried over into a higher realm of rebirth. Further, the niche has been specifically designed to direct one’s focus toward iconic images—in the form of the two standing

²³² For the full inscription and a translation of its contents, see the Introduction of this dissertation. The inscription is published in MWL, 72-73, and a translation is included in Suchan, 850.

²³³ The iconography of these two deities, as well as their various depictions through Bei shan and elsewhere in Sichuan, is treated in *ibid.*, 455-485 and 509-525. On this niche, see *ibid.*, 521-524.

figures of Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha—that could be treated as the objects of the presentation of offerings, thus providing an opportunity for continual merit generation on the part of the donors.

Described in such a manner, the niche seems to lack any sort of intrigue. However, the inventiveness of the carvings becomes far more apparent if we focus our attention on the implied narrative suggested in the space of the niche. Simply put, this composition that surrounds Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings of Purgatory descending on clouds completely inverts the narrative structure expected by anyone familiar with accounts or images of netherworldly judgment. Whereas Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha typically descend into the Courts of Purgatory to bring succor to the spirits being submitted to the judgment (and punishments) of the kings who preside there, here it is instead the kings who are brought into the space of the two saviors and, more importantly, the worshippers. The kings, in a sense, have come to pay court to the bodhisattvas. Such a scenario implies, then, that the bodhisattvas are permanently present in our world, while the Kings of Purgatory remain distant, approaching humans only when summoned during ritual performance, be it a ritual as elaborate as the Water-Land Retreat or as simple as the presentation of incense. Gods and ghosts are thereby kept provisionally separate from our realm; their decidedly unexpected irruption into the space of the niche thus necessarily shocks and fascinates, much as Ouyang Xiu described in his text.

Composed in this distinctly unconventional manner, this niche ensures that offerings can be made to the bodhisattvas and that something like “bribes”—in the form of the offerings made during funerary rituals, including the Water-Land Retreat—can be presented directly to the kings. The convenience of such a solution for the worshipper is self-evident. Yet at the same time, such a niche surrounds the worshippers themselves with the Kings of Purgatory, temporarily

subjecting them to post-mortem judgment in their present life. Hell, in other words, becomes something decidedly material and present—and all thanks to the liturgical cloud. Intriguingly, this compositional conceit was to become standard in Water-Land paintings of later periods, where the Kings of Purgatory inevitably were depicted descending on clouds into the ritual space (Figure 2.81).

Further Inversions: The Cloudy Intersection of Painting and Ritual

Several paintings from the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats*, painted between 1178 and 1188 by Lin Tinggui 林庭珪 and Zhou Jichang 周季常 near Ningbo 寧波, Zhejiang Province, extend the uses of liturgical clouds in even more innovative ways, ultimately speaking to the important conceptual parallels between ritual and visual representation.²³⁴ At first glance, the first scroll in the set seems to follow a compositional model standard to works in the genre of liturgical cloud imagery (Figure 1.6). Five arhats—the objects of the offering ritual—descend from the upper reaches of the scroll on a cloud bank rendered with wiry ink outlines and light monochrome washes. Below this billowing cloud bank, an open-air, tile-roofed pavilion sits on stilts atop a lotus pond, nestled in a bamboo grove. Within the pavilion, a monk, who has removed his shoes to stand on a mat, holds an incense censer, whose wispy white smoke rises to connect with the deities' cloud-bank, and he leads a group of laypeople—two supplicating men, dressed in the garb of scholar-officials; two women, presumably their wives; a female attendant holding a small child; and a younger male attendant in conversation with an old man—in making offerings at a brocade-covered altar table set with a large incense burner and two flower vases. The pond-top pavilion seems to be but a wing of a mansion, another room of which is visible in the middle-right section of the painting. Here, four servants are shown preparing elaborate

²³⁴ For a full overview of recent scholarship on these works, see Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation.

offerings set on tables placed in front of two hanging scrolls depicting arhats—the very deities descending at left (Figure 1.7); indeed, the compositions of these paintings that have been *mise en abyme* are closely comparable to other works in the Daitoku-ji set (Figure 2.82). In other words, this liturgical painting narrativizes itself, depicting the very ritual practices for which it was crafted, and distantly evoking earlier icons that made use of the liturgical cloud, such as the Soul-Guiding Avalokiteśvara in the collection of the Harvard Art Museums (Figure 2.67) discussed above.

The cloud in this painting deserves some further attention, however. Although neither the theme of cloud-borne descending deities nor the specific painterly means of rendering the cloud itself are particularly noteworthy, the way in which the cloud is integrated into the composition holds a surprise. Notably, the cloud and the deities it bears are proportionally far larger than the humans and their architecture below. As such, the painting sets up a perspectival conundrum: whereas in a typical Chinese painting, the upper registers of the work contain that which is most distant from the viewer, making the lower registers the work's foreground, here, the painting places the viewer closest to the descending deities at top. In one sense, then, we viewers are placed on the same plane as the arhats, and we descend with them toward the comparatively lower register. The painter gives us a privileged view of the proceedings, a view normally inaccessible to all but the deities themselves, or perhaps to ritualists particularly gifted in visualization. But if we consider how such a painting would be hung within the ritual space—something indicated in this work itself—we can imagine that the viewer's line of sight would be approximately equal with the depiction of ritual activity in the middle and lower registers of the painting. Our line of sight thus would oscillate between that which would be directly in front of us and the larger, more eye-catching figures above. Our familiar mode of viewing is

profoundly disturbed. In a move similar to the inversion of the typical narrative of voyages through Purgatory that was engineered by the cloud-obsessed carvers of Bei shan Niche 253, here, too, the painter uses clouds to controvert our expectations—not of narrative, but of painterly conventions themselves. Damisch’s conception of the dialectical semiotic status of the cloud resonates.

The use of nebulous bodies in the seventeenth painting in the set, whose connections to the Water-Land Retreat were described in the introduction to Part 1 of this dissertation, demands some consideration, as well (Figure 1.1). Here, as the Water-Land Retreat is performed at night on an outdoor platform by five arhats—saintly stand-ins for the mundane monks that would normally conduct such a ritual—, ghosts and spirits emerge from the mists in the upper-left-hand corner of the silk, seemingly entranced by the incantations of the ritualists (Figure 1.2). Significantly, two arhats peer into those mists, their expressions of rapt attention suggesting that they—perhaps unlike their colleagues—are able to see the emerging ghosts. Clouds *per se* are nowhere to be seen here; in their place, one finds only terrestrially bound mists, rendered bonelessly with atmospheric ink wash. The sense of the manifestation of spirits of all classes—from Hell-dwelling demons to the ghosts of military men and scholar-officials—is palpable. Gnarled trees, the hollow trunk of one of which dominates the upper-right-hand area of the composition, lends a distinct sense of eeriness to the work; while spaces reserved among the branches of the trees provide evocative nooks from which the lightly colored bodies of demons emerge.

Importantly, this pictorial depiction accords closely with passages in manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat that describe how the Ritual Master 法師 is to visualize the arrival of these spirits. After summoning hungry ghosts to the ritual site, for example,

Zhipan and Zhuhong's 祿宏 (1535-1615) *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 (*Ritual Manual for Performing the Retreat of the Grand Assembly of All Saintly and Mundane Beings of Water and Land in This Dharma-World*), which was used extensively in the Ningbo region, directs that the "Ritual Master [should] visualize innumerable hungry ghosts either coming from the four directions or arriving from below the earth; they then abide to one side 法師想諸餓鬼無央數眾，或從四方而來，或從地下而至，却住一面。”²³⁵ Terrestrial mists, rendered with neither the outlines nor the heavy colors that often define celestial clouds, serve as a convenient pictorial shorthand by which to suggest spirits' emerging from the earth.

This sense of materialization is reinforced at the level of the materiality of the painting itself. By rendering the arhats in highly stable, mineral-pigmented polychrome, and by rendering the ghosts largely in the decidedly unstable medium of monochrome ink, the artist seems to directly figure the ontological division separating the two types of beings. Significantly, however, these ghostly figures are not rendered in pure monochrome. Rather, light vegetal pigments have been added to their forms, suggesting that they have been captured in a moment of transformation. These ghosts are coming into form, materializing before our very eyes, approaching the same ontological status as that of the arhats. The artist has thus attempted to bridge the gap between the realms of the mundane and the supramundane, making the otherworldly as material, and hence, as empirical, as the seen-world. Ultimately, this points to a double mediation involving both ritual and representation. By using light vegetal pigments to deconstruct the ontological division mapped out with mineral pigments and monochrome ink, the artist ensures that ghosts are transformed, taking material, sensorially experience-able, presence

²³⁵ FJSF, fasc. 3, 802a.

in the painting, just as they do during the ritual performance itself. Representation and ritual become one through the medium of painting. Further, by showing only two monks who actively perceive these now-materializing netherworldly forms, the artist seems to establish a parallel between these gifted visualists and himself as an artist-conjurer. Through his manipulation of the painterly medium, he gives us viewer-worshippers privileged access to fantastic visions of transformation.

The Body and Face of the Liturgical Cloud

In both of these paintings, however, a relatively strict division remains between the spaces of deities and ghosts and the spaces of ritual (that is, of humans). Although it is implied that the arhats are about to step into human space in the first painting, and that the ghosts might ascend onto the arhats' ritual platform in the seventeenth, in neither of these paintings does any figure truly transgress spatial, or ontological, boundaries. A third scroll, however—the twenty-fourth in the set—, uses clouds to remarkable effect to suggest the permeability of these boundaries and to allow a certain figure to fully transgress them (Figure 1.36). In the middle of this composition, two laywomen stand amid offering tables in a ritual hall. Their sumptuous robes and jewelry are depicted with bright mineral pigments, whose expense seems to mirror the high status of these ladies. The ritual hall is brilliantly tiled and its columns are rendered in bright vermilion red. The tables have been set with offerings, including flowers and gold vessels; and a gilded incense burner placed on a beautiful silk brocade emits smoke that conjoins with the vegetal-red clouds. In the lower-left quadrant of the composition, five arhats, surrounded by a bank of clouds that separates them from their supplicants, catch our attention. The bank of clouds, rendered with a light red vegetal pigment, and outlined in areas with wiry black ink lines, seems to swell from lower left to upper right; in the lower-most regions of the composition are

visible other tufts of clouds, whose spiraling form, ink outlines, gray ink wash, and reserved-ground penumbra recall the techniques used to render the clouds in the Tokyo National Museum's Southern Song arhat painting described above (Figures 2.72 and 2.74). Yet the linchpin in this composition is the sixth figure on the arhat's side of the red cumuloid screen. He is represented in odd contrapposto, seemingly moving forward yet looking over his shoulder with a neckless head. He is dressed in elaborate robes whose elegance contrasts with those of the arhats he leads. Further, he wears a crown, a piece of headgear that one might not necessarily associate with Buddhist monks. And he holds an incense censer, from which wisps of smoke rise to merge with the clouds. His posture clearly suggests that he is in the midst of leading the arhats. Looking carefully, we see that he is about to take them through a cleft in the clouds, which opens onto a set of stairs leading to the interior of the ritual hall. So who, exactly, is this figure, and what is his relation to the arhats beside him and the laywomen above?

The figure's elegant robes and distinctive crown suggest the costume of a king, many different types of which are depicted in the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats*. Similarly dressed figures stand in as Kings of Purgatory, Dragon Kings, and gods of weather, earth, and water; in other Song-dynasty works, Brahma is depicted in an analogous manner (though often with more elaborately adorned robes), as are many astral deities. The precise identification of this figure is further complicated by the somewhat ambiguous narrative scenario in this work. However, given that most works in the set that depict any sort of ritual action use clouds to clearly separate the spaces occupied by humans and by arhats, and given that clouds here, too, serve to separate these spaces, it seems likely that a ritual action of some sort is depicted. The kingly attire of this figure, and the courtly demeanor of the laywomen above, might then suggest that this figure is a king who has invited arhats to a feast within a ritually adorned palace hall. He is, then,

something like a “Retreat Sponsor 齋主,” or host, who is performing an Arhat Offering Ritual or a related rite modeled on the guest-host paradigm of ritual practice ubiquitous in Chinese Buddhism.

While this identification of the figure seems most likely, it still does nothing to explain how, exactly, this king is able to physically interact with the arhats he leads. I would suggest, then, that we need to think about a ritual host and his actions in a somewhat broader manner. Manuals for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat may well give us an important clue, as they divide the duties of hosting among the Ritual Master and the Cantor 表白. Notably, it is the role of the Ritual Master to visualize the arrival of all deities summoned into the ritual space. While the Cantor recites mantras and homilies and physically presents offerings to the deities, the Ritual Master engages in quiet concentration to ensure, solely through mental exertion, that the deities do, in fact, make it to their feast. Significantly, these principal ritualists, like the officiants in many Esoteric rituals, are each temporarily consecrated to perform the ritual through the recitation of spells and through the placing of a crown atop their head.

This schema is elaborated most completely in Zhipan and Zhuhong’s version of the liturgy. Of the extant Water-Land liturgies, it is only Zhipan’s “southern” version—which was composed and primarily performed near Ningbo, the very region in which the Daitoku-ji paintings were created—that includes a complete set of instructions for the actions, both physical and meditative, to be performed by the monks and laypeople involved in the ritual.²³⁶

Throughout the manual, a clear division of labor is maintained. It is the Ritual Master who leads

²³⁶ Sections of the TDMY also include such instructions, but they are only sporadically integrated into the text. The unsystematized inclusion of these instructions throughout the three fascicles of the manual leads one to wonder whether the manual might not have been compiled by directly copying sections of other liturgies. In other words, perhaps like the “sets” of Water-Land paintings discussed in Chapter 2.1, the manuals, too, are less unified than they appear.

the Sponsor 施主 in performing actions within the ritual space, who delivers extended homilies, and who performs the many visualizations that accompany externally visible actions. The Cantor, meanwhile, recites *gāthās*, mantras, invocations, and announcements; he also manipulates ritual paraphernalia such as bells and water pitchers.²³⁷ The Ritual Master thus stands in opposition to the Cantor; nevertheless, the two are inextricably bound, as the sounds of the Cantor's voice, his manipulation of bells and gongs, and his presentations of incense provide the aural and olfactory cues for the Ritual Master's visualizations.

Many of the short texts recited by the Cantor in Zhipan's text closely parallel those from the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* that were surveyed in Chapter 2.1 of this dissertation, and clouds again frequently appear in verses on incense and the descent of deities.²³⁸ Several of these otherwise stereotyped verses point in intriguing directions not seen in the "northern" Water-Land manual. For example, clouds become a motif of protection, as in a short passage recited at the beginning of the ritual during the summoning of the deities that will guard the ritual space throughout the performance of the liturgy. We are told that "those summoned above have, kindly, already arrived, surrounding and protecting the ritual site, like clouds densely gathering 上來召請，已荷光臨。環衛道場，如雲密布."²³⁹

More interestingly, clouds are used explicitly as an image of non-duality, a body that lacks constant form, an entity that lacks substance. A *gāthā* of incense-offering recited at the beginning of the liturgy of invocation by the Cantor, who holds a censer in his hand while ringing a bell 振鈴執爐, goes:

²³⁷ Instructions addressed to the Sponsor and the Assembly 大眾 are also included throughout the manual.

²³⁸ FJSF, fasc. 1, 787a, for example, says that "of the sages and saints of the ten directions, none does not approach [the ritual space] like clouds 十方賢聖。無不雲臨。"

²³⁹ Ibid., 785c.

Understand the dependent origination of this marvelous incense:
 originally lacking anything, that is, truly empty.
 Surrounding the great void, exhausting the fragrant cloud;
 that is, this inconceivable thing is a marvelous provision.
 Neither possessing nor empty, all is absolute;
 both obstructing and reflecting, it must extinguish in the middle.
 Relying on contemplation of the middle path, and this incense of the marvelous mind,
 on this day, we piously make a dharma offering.

諦此妙香緣起法	本來無物即真空
太虛周徧盡香雲	即此難思為妙假
非有非空皆絕待	雙遮雙照必亡中
仰憑中觀妙心香	是日殷勤修法供。 ²⁴⁰

Such imagery takes us back both to the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* and to the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, seemingly the *locus classicus* for the concept of the non-dual cloud.²⁴¹ One cannot help but think, too, of the boneless mists in the seventeenth painting of the Daitoku-ji set, and of the sparingly outlined red cumuloid banks in the twenty-fourth painting.

However, it is in the instructions for the visualizations to be performed by the Ritual Master that the cloud imagery in this manual reaches its height of vividness, resonating profoundly with imagery throughout the Daitoku-ji set. The most common such instruction directs that the “Ritual Master visualize the cloud of incense [or flowers, lamps, foods, or robes] filling all in front of each saint 法師想香雲徧名聖賢之前.”²⁴² Elsewhere, the incense-cloud becomes an agent of awakening, as “the Ritual Master visualizes the incense-cloud sea’s inheriting the Buddha’s great power, filling all before the myriad beings of the Six Paths of the *Dharmadhātu*, and allowing them all to gain awakening and to arouse the joyful mind; pray that they hasten to the dharma assembly 法師想香雲海，承佛威力，徧至法界六道羣生之前，悉

²⁴⁰ FJSF, fasc. 2, 789b.

²⁴¹ The Yunnan manual contains a similarly evocative couplet: “Life is like flowing water: where has it ever stopped? Phenomena are like floating clouds: all is empty 生如流水何曾住，事似浮雲盡是空.” See CGSL, “Tigang,” n.p.

²⁴² Ibid., 796c; for variations, see *ibid.*, 796c-797a.

令覺知，咸發喜心。願趨法會。”²⁴³ As with the “northern” manual’s Golden Bridge, the “Pure Path 淨道” of Zhipan’s manual inspires particularly lofty description and visualization. Here, there are

lofty, bright terraces and halls, and arrayed, wondrous chariots and palanquins. Immortal music sounds in the void, the sounds of *sheng* and *qing* intermittently produced; heavenly robes embrace the mist, pearl chains hanging down. By reciting and reciting, this will never wane; thus, they all are adorned without limit.

聳光明之臺殿。列殊勝之輦輿。仙樂鳴空。笙磬之音間作。天衣擁霧。珠璣之飾下垂。以念念具足不虧。故彼彼莊嚴無盡。”²⁴⁴

The Ritual Master is then directed to “visualize that the afore-summoned Three Treasures and all the saints and sages of the myriad heavens universally gather like clouds and abide among the treasure towers and pavilions on the Pure Path, their lights mutually illuminating, without any obstruction 法師想上來召請三寶諸天一切聖賢普皆雲集，住淨道上寶樓閣中。光明交映，無有障礙。”²⁴⁵ The resonances with the descriptions of the non-dual splendor of the infinitely interpenetrating cosmoses of Maitreya’s Tower, visited by Sudhana in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, are clear. Further offerings of incense only add to the brilliance of the scene, as “the Ritual Master visualizes that this incense cloud produces innumerable palaces and halls of the Seven Treasures, clothing, marvelous music and marvelous flowers, sweet dew and fine foods, all presented at once before the various saints and sages—none is not surrounded 法師想此香雲出生無量七寶宮殿，供具衣服，妙樂妙華，甘露肴饈。於諸聖賢之前一時奉供，無不周徧。”²⁴⁶

Ultimately, after purifying and converting the various unenlightened spirits, “the Ritual Master

²⁴³ FJSF, fasc. 3, 800b.

²⁴⁴ FJSF, fasc. 2, 793a.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 792a.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 792c.

visualizes the [beings] of the Six Paths, the deceased souls, etc., arraying themselves in order on the Pure Path, like a sea of clouds 法師想六道，及亡靈等，次第班列於淨道之上，猶如雲海。²⁴⁷ While not directly depicting a Ritual Master, the composition and imagery of the Daitoku-ji painting resonates closely with the content of these visualizations. In this work, the deities and clouds of the host's mind take on real, visible form.

More intriguingly, perhaps, the painting can also be understood to depict an ontological fiction. In reality, the host—be he a more mundane figure such as a king, or a more spiritually empowered figure such as a Ritual Master—would sit or stand quietly to the side to perform his visualizations, while others, such as the Cantor, loudly recited texts and manipulated ritual paraphernalia. In painting, however, the host can physically interact with the deities. His pictorial body can exist side-by-side with these supramundane beings. Importantly, by representing this host within the space of the arhats, and by clearly indicating a cleft in the cloud bank that otherwise divides the spheres of the human and divine, the artist suggests the very real possibility of the physical irruption of the divine into our mundane world. The cloud—thanks to its permeability and its status as an ever-changing mass that mediates between Heaven and Earth—becomes, then, the ideal pictorial motif for an era characterized by the incessant irruption of gods and ghosts into the human realm and by a desire for increasingly numerous and increasingly material representations of the divine.

At the same time, the permeable cloud also comes to serve as a suture between states of visibility and hiddenness. A corporeal metaphor serves well to describe this. While the public “face” of Buddhist ritual—those audible homilies and visible, external actions fully sensible to the lay-worshipper—may appear to constitute a self-sufficient liturgical performance, the

²⁴⁷ FJSF, fasc. 4, 808c.

ultimate success of the ritual is entirely dependent on the aspects of liturgy hidden from public view. These aspects, particularly the visualizations of the type performed by the Ritual Master, might be said to constitute the inner “body” of any liturgical performance. This metaphor can be extended in a variety of ways. On the one hand, these inner visualizations are, in essence, the core of the ritual, its heart; without them, the “ritual” is nothing more than systematized gestures and recitations. On the other hand, the locus of visualization is, of course, the mind, that hidden place within the body inaccessible to all but the visualizer himself. This notion of hiddenness itself may be crucial for the success of the ritual performance, for the fact that the body of the ritual is, actually, invisible may confer upon these meditative actions a certain power unattainable by that which is visually accessible.

Yet the body also functions in another important way in these images. Specifically, examining this work with the formal device of the “suture” in mind, something described particularly well by film theorists, highlights the work’s pictorial innovation.²⁴⁸ Most generically, the host sutures the spaces of deities and humans, bridging the mundane and the supramundane. Indeed, more than any other figure, it is the Ritual Master who exists simultaneously *as* human and yet *within* the space of the divine. Moreover, thanks to his being depicted from behind, the Ritual Master becomes an identificatory figure, a suture through which we viewer-worshippers can imagine ourselves into the painting, opening the work of art, and the ritual performance that it depicts, for imaginative engagement by the viewer. In this sense, the suturing figure creates a visual effect not unlike the perspectival inversion that we investigated with regard to the first painting in the Daitoku-ji set. Through both techniques, we viewer-worshippers are brought into the multisensorial space of the painting, transgressing the boundaries that otherwise ought to

²⁴⁸ See especially, Kaja Silverman, “Suture,” chap. 5 in *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

separate our real-world selves from both the representational space of the painting and from the divine space of the arhats. These techniques thus give us direct access to the internal, unseen aspects of ritual.

Ultimately, the fact that the painters of the Daitoku-ji works chose to expose the powerful inner workings of ritual to public view, however, seems to raise questions about the value of hiddenness. Indeed, these paintings seem to refute that value, asserting instead that what is of greatest import is the material instantiation of the divine, and the possibility of direct interaction between the divine and the mundane. Through the medium of painting and the innovative deployment of the protean liturgical cloud, such a suturing of the real and the represented thus becomes possible in a way that is, ultimately, accessible to clergy and laity alike. On the one hand, then, the painting serves as visual confirmation of—if not a visual argument for—the efficacy of hidden ritual acts. On the other hand, we might read the painting as a more hubristic expression: by cleverly uniting both internal and external acts of ritual performance within the represented space of the pictorial field, and by opening to us viewer-worshippers visions that we otherwise would never have, the painter almost seems to imply his superiority to the monks that he depicts.

Coda: Representational Engagement of the Viewer

In insisting on the necessity of making materially manifest the hidden and liminal aspects of ritual, these paintings seem to partake of a general obsession in Song Buddhist art with representing that crossing-over between the human and the divine, and with bridging, and perhaps thereby forcing reflection on, the gap between representation and reality. As I have shown in the preceding pages, the liturgical cloud facilitated this blurring of the represented and the real in remarkable ways. However, other strategies were employed, as well, and notably, it

seems to have been the Song that saw the widespread emergence of pictorial avatars of the viewer-worshipper.²⁴⁹ Such figures—who are posed with their back turned to the viewer, unlike earlier depictions of donor figures, which invariably turn *toward* the viewer—began to appear frequently in paintings and in cave shrines, particularly in works associated with the *Yuanjue jing* 圓覺經 (*Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*)²⁵⁰ (and, of course, also in landscape paintings).²⁵¹

The mesmerizing space of the Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞 (Cave of Perfect Enlightenment) at the Dafo wan 大佛灣 (Great Buddha Cove) of Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain) in Dazu provides a particularly vivid example of this phenomenon (Figure 2.83).²⁵² Seated images of Vairocana, Rocana, and Śākyamuni—the Three Buddha-Bodies²⁵³—serve as the iconic focal point of the cave; they are flanked by two attendants interpreted to be Liu

²⁴⁹ The Nirvana stele in the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西博物院 in Taiyuan 太原, dated to 691, provides one notable earlier example of worshipping figure with his back turned to the viewer. A Gandharan Nirvana stele now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York also includes such a figure.

²⁵⁰ *Da fangguang yuanjue xiuduoluo liaoyi jing* 大方廣圓覺修多羅了義經, translated by Buddhatrāta 佛陀多羅 (act. mid seventh century) (attrib.), in T17, no. 842.

²⁵¹ On avatars in landscape painting, see Richard Barnhart, “Figures in Landscape,” *Archives of Asian Art* 42 (1989): 62-70.

²⁵² For an English-language introduction to this cave, see Angela Howard, *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China* (Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2001), 63-66. See also the formal and iconographic description in *Collected Works of the Researches on Dazu Stone Carvings* 大足石刻研究, edited by Liu Changjiu 劉長久 et al. (Chengdu: Sichuan sheng shehui kexue yuan chubanshe, 1985), 496-498. A more complete account is given in Tong Dengjin 童登金 and Hu Liangxue 胡良學, “Dazu Baoding shan Dafo wan ‘Yuanjue jingbian’ ku de diaocha yanjiu 大足寶頂山大佛灣‘圓覺經變’窟的調查研究,” in *Dazu shike yanjiu wenji* 4 大足石刻研究文集 4 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2002), 397-415. A brief refutation of some of Tong and Hu’s interpretations, as well as an introduction to Huayan imagery in Dazu more generally, is included in Chen Qingxiang 陳清香, “Dazu shiku zhong de Huayan sixiang tiyao 大足石窟中的華嚴思想題要,” in *2005 nian Chongqing Dazu shike guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 2005 年重慶大足石刻國際學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2007), 278-296, esp. 292-294. For more general essays on Huayan caves in Sichuan, including the Yuanjue dong at Baoding shan, see Chapter 2.2 of this dissertation.

²⁵³ Tong and Hu identify these three buddhas as Vairocana, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Amitābha based on their mudras and hand-held implements. See Tong and Hu, 411-412. While this is possible, given the distinctly Huayan overtones of the cave space as a whole, I am inclined to identify them as the Three Buddha-Bodies, the conception of which was developed particularly extensively by Huayan practitioners. However, temple records suggest that the grouping of Vairocana, Bhaiṣajyaguru, and Amitābha was not uncommon in the Song, and the figures’ iconographic attributes do seem to fit.

Benzun 柳本尊 (act. late ninth to early tenth centuries), the late-Tang founder of the Sichuanese Buddhist sect centered at Baoding shan in the Song, and Zhao Zhifeng 趙智鳳 (1159-1249), the revitalizer of that sect and mastermind of the Baoding shan complex. These five figures are surrounded on the flanking walls by twelve seated bodhisattvas.²⁵⁴ These are the twelve bodhisattvas who pose questions to the Buddha in this short text that serves as a primer on enlightenment and that found particular favor among Huayan and Chan practitioners from the ninth century onward.²⁵⁵ Each buddha, bodhisattva, and attendant is surrounded by billowing clouds, suggesting their manifesting before our very eyes as we enter this cavernous space removed from the mundane world. These clouds blend into craggy, but rather geometrically carved, mountain-forms that fill the walls of the cave; cloud almost seems to generate rock. Almost ironically, the natural rock of the cave walls has been dramatically reshaped to conform to an artificial ideal of “rockness,” a situation that necessarily reminds one of Zhang Yanyuan’s demand that painting reveal the artifice (that is, the artist’s hand) of its creation. Further, the course of a natural spring found near the cave has been diverted so that it flows through carvings on both the interior and exterior of the cave, filling the cave with the decidedly calming sounds of both flowing and dripping water.²⁵⁶ Meanwhile, on cloud-banks that seem to emerge, like manifestations, from the heads of the bodhisattvas, there are pictured individual scenes from Sudhana’s pilgrimage to the fifty-three teachers. As is typical of this genre of imagery, Sudhana

²⁵⁴ The bodhisattvas are Mañjuśrī 文殊師利菩薩, Samantabhadra 普賢菩薩, Universal Vision 普眼菩薩, Vajragarbha 金剛藏菩薩, Maitreya 彌勒菩薩, Pure Wisdom 清淨慧菩薩, Superb Influence 威德自在菩薩, Sound-Distinguisher (i.e., Avalokiteśvara) 辯音菩薩, Purifier of the Myriad Karmic Obstructions 淨諸業障菩薩, Universal Enlightenment 普覺菩薩, Perfect Enlightenment 圓覺菩薩, and Chief Worthy 賢善首菩薩. See *ibid.*, 913a.

²⁵⁵ For an in-depth discussion and translation of this text, see A. Charles Muller, *The Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment: Korean Buddhism's Guide to Meditation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

²⁵⁶ See Howard, *Summit of Treasures*, 63.

is generally pictured standing with palms pressed in reverence before the larger figure of a teacher.²⁵⁷ Again, clouds play an important role not only in structuring and linking the various figures depicted on the cave's walls but also in creating a generally auspicious or extraordinary atmosphere that primes the viewer-worshipper for his or her engagement with these deities.

However, the most striking figure in this cave is the only one not to be surrounded by billowing cumuloid masses. Directly in front of the altar table that stands before the Three Buddhas, another bodhisattva kneels on a lotus blossom pedestal that rises from the stone-tiled floor. The figure's costume closely mimics that of the other twelve bodhisattvas in the chamber. He bows his head slightly, not making eye-contact with the exalted figure of Vairocana in front of him, and he presses his palms together in a gesture of reverence. Such figures were often included in depictions of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment*, both sculpted and painted, from the Song and its neighbors.²⁵⁸ In the Goryeo-dynasty painting of this subject in the collection of the Museum of Fine Art, Boston, briefly discussed above, this avatar figure becomes the focal point of the whole composition (Figure 2.75). Extensive empty space is left around him as he engages in meditative dialogue with Vairocana. Many other figures in the composition direct their gaze toward him in expectant anticipation, eager to see what benefits this model worshipper's behavior will produce (Figure 2.84).

Angela Howard has suggested that the kneeling bodhisattva at Baoding shan “embodies” the twelve bodhisattvas of the *Sutra of Perfect Enlightenment* “in the act of entreating to be

²⁵⁷ On Gaṇḍavyūha imagery in general, see Jan Fontein, *The Pilgrimage of Sudhana: A Study of Gaṇḍavyūha Illustrations in China, Japan and Java* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1967).

²⁵⁸ The Huayan dong 華嚴洞 (Huayan Cave) in neighboring Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province, on the other hand, lacks such a figure (Figure 2.85). The iconography differs slightly from the cave at Baoding shan, the Three Buddha-Bodies having been replaced by the Three Huayan Saints (Vairocana, Mañjuśrī, and Samantabhadra). The depictions of Sudhana's pilgrimage in the Anyue cave, however, are particularly fine (Figure 2.86).

taught,” and indeed, his respectful posture does give such an impression.²⁵⁹ However, the prominence given to this figure both in the cave at Baoding shan and in the MFA painting—that is, the fact that this figure becomes a centripetal node around which visitors to the cave must circulate and toward which other supplicants turn their anxious gazes—suggests that he fulfills other more complex functions, as well. On the one hand, he provides a behavioral model for the worshipper, a reverent ideal to be emulated. Further, permanently residing within the space of the cave, he eternally serves as an ideal avatar for the worshipper, paying reverence even though human worshippers may be absent. On the other hand, thanks to his placement in the middle of the cave floor, removed from the banks of buddhas and bodhisattvas lining the cave walls to kneel within the space of human worshippers, he comes to occupy a far more liminal position, both spatially and ontologically. He is not directly mentioned in the scriptural source, and he has been placed among the human worshippers for whom he models reverence, becoming at once man and deity. He is, in other words, the suture that links mundane and supramundane space, that bridges the real and the represented.

Intriguingly, and perhaps even more enchantingly, at several sites in Dazu—including the Western Pure Land tableau at Baoding shan (Figures 2.87 and 2.88) and the cave of the revolving sutra case 轉輪經藏 (Cave 136) at Bei shan (Figures 2.89 and 2.90), sculpted figures of children are shown to physically straddle the carved balustrades that separate the spaces of the divine, spaces of representation, from the profane, yet real, space that we viewer-worshippers occupy. Divine representations step into our world, becoming, almost, real.

²⁵⁹ Howard, 64-65.

Conclusion

The works that we have examined thus point to three important approaches by which visual artists attempted to make the unruliness of the supramundane sensorially accessible, and perhaps more controllable, by us mundane viewer-worshippers. In all of these works, it is the triumverate of cloud, mist, and smoke that is at the heart of the mediational acts of both representation and ritual. These nebulous bodies become a medium that simultaneously separates and sutures different spaces, realms, and ontologies. Significantly, both in ritual and in these paintings, it is the commingling of smoke and cloud that gets us into a visionary mode, allowing us to step into the minds of meditating monks. I want to end this chapter by returning to a work that exemplifies this visionary mode—and that unifies the external and internal aspects of ritual performance—perhaps better than any other.

Specifically, I wish to return to the Qinglong si mural with which Chapter 2.1 began. We have already carefully examined the various types of clouds that appear in this work, their compositionally and semantic import, and their connections to the fantastic cloud-based visions and metaphors recited by the Cantor throughout the performance of the ritual. However, we very quickly sidestepped the observation that this mural, too, is centered upon the figure of a monk, here depicted directly from behind so that he may become a true suture for the viewer-worshipper (Figure 2.12). Surrounded by clouds and deities, he kneels before an altar table set with a candle, an offering, and a grand incense burner. With his head bowed as though to suggest the quiet recitation of prayers or mantras of summoning, and with his hidden hands presumably placed in a gesture of reverence, he is shown in the midst of an external act of ritual.

However, given the myriad clouds that surround him, and the incense burner before him, we might imagine, too, that he simultaneously visualizes the arrival of the myriad beings of the

cosmos so that they may hear his request. The grand censer again plays a key structural role, its wisps of smoke transforming into the myriad, constantly changing cloud-forms that both allow the manifestation of saintly buddhas and bodhisattvas and that convey lesser deities to assemble beneath the imposing buddha-bodies above. This monk thus seems to embody both the internal and external aspects of ritual. Together, his aural summoning and olfactory offerings set the stage for an act of visualization that is given visual form through the medium of painting. Through the view of his back, we viewer-worshippers are sutured into his mind, wherein the myriad spirits of the cosmos are able to assemble in the ritual space around him. The visionary becomes visual thanks to the medium of painting and the figure of the suturing body. In the clouds of his visions, visions predicated on the extensive poetic images described in the ritual manuals and recited by the Cantor, the metaphoric potential of clouds opens to us, while deities themselves come to take nearly literal, material form. Thanks to the cloud, ritual and representation come together in an enchanting synthesis that carries us viewer-worshippers to visionary realms. The following chapter, however, will reveal that these visionary realms are supported by a far less lofty, and highly bureaucratized, vision of cosmic functioning.

PART 3 | Ordering the Cosmos: The Performance and Aesthetics of Bureaucracy in the Water-Land Retreat

Introduction

I want to begin the final part of this dissertation by revisiting a painting that is by now very familiar to us—namely, the seventeenth work in the late-twelfth-century Daitoku-ji 大徳寺 set of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖 (Figure 1.1). As we saw in the introduction to Part 1 of this dissertation, this is a painting that depicts the essence of the Water-Land Retreat: five arhats, saintly stand-ins for the mundane monks who would normally perform such a ritual, are assembled on an outdoor platform, where they collectively summon and visualize the assembling of wandering ghosts, who materialize amid the mists beyond the platform. Four junior clerics—two of whom gaze into the mists, seemingly seeing spirits that their comrades do not—are gathered around a senior ritualist, who is seated in an elaborate green chair placed before a red lacquered table. The table has been set with a silk cloth, atop which are placed a hand-held incense censer, an open text, and a closed book. A larger incense burner resting on a nearby stand and two tall candleholders, suggesting the nighttime setting of the scene, complete this basic set of ritual paraphernalia. Earlier, I suggested that the senior ritualist is most likely reciting mantras of summoning; indeed, it seems that the ghostly spirits emerging from the mists are materializing in direct response to his oral formulae. Looking closely at the open text before the him, we even find that the right-hand page from which he recites contains verses in seven-character lines—that is, poetic lines of praise of the type that typically accompanies a mantra—, while the left-hand page, whose pigments are now partially abraded, seems to contain a rather longer passage—either a homily in parallel prose, or perhaps, a complicated *dhāraṇī*. In other words, these fine details make it clear that the ritualist is, in fact, orally summoning the ghostly spirits to assemble to take material form in the ritual enclosure. The painting thus directly

figures the ontologically transformative act that is the essence of the Water-Land Retreat, whereby aural summoning and mental visualization unite to allow spirits to take material form within the ritual space so that they may ultimately be reborn into a higher path of existence.

Whereas we previously focused on the narrative embedded in the painting and the mists that facilitate that sense of supernatural materialization, what will attract our attention in this chapter is instead the triumvirate of table, text, and burner that are placed at the very center of the liturgical space. These three ritual objects bring to mind another type of summoning that takes place during the Water-Land Retreat—namely, acts of invocation that depend upon the writing, recitation, and burning of various documents. The table, here treated more like a desk—and hence, perhaps better termed as such—became a key, and rather surprising, motif in Song-dynasty Buddhist art, just as the document and the burner became essential accoutrements for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat. Through these objects, ritual thus becomes, in a sense, bureaucratized. A series of questions arises. Whence did these objects come, and why did they become relevant to Song-dynasty Buddhist ritualists? How did these bureaucratic tendencies transform the behavior and performance of the ritualists themselves? And in what ways might bureaucracy, a conceptual structure of hierarchical relations maintained through the exchange of textual documents—in other words, a structure that seems almost antithetical to the visual (save in the materialized form of the archive)—, come to shape visual artworks themselves? The final part of this dissertation will, then, seek to address the implications of the rise of these objects—symbolic of the bureaucratization of ritual—that, with the exception of the burner, had held little interest to earlier Chinese Buddhist ritualists.

In the previous part of this dissertation, I attempted to use the motif of the cloud as a lens through which to examine a shared visual imagination linking text, image, and performance

within the Water-Land Retreat. The approach will remain similar in this part; however, rather than treating a single motif—something comparatively circumscribed, containable, and almost tangible—, we will instead attempt to examine the Water-Land Retreat and its visual culture from the conceptual perspective of bureaucratic practice and structure embodied in the trio of desk, document, and burner. I have alluded throughout this dissertation to the inherently bureaucratic nature of the Water-Land Retreat; in this part, I want to explore that notion in greater detail, probing exactly to what extent this structural concept can be understood to shape the Water-Land Retreat and its visual culture. In the end, I will argue that bureaucratic practice and images function dialectically within the ritual, ultimately serving as but an expedient means by which to advance a decidedly non-bureaucratic conception of the cosmos and of ritual. My interest also lies especially in understanding how a general bureaucratic conception of the cosmos not only shapes the structure of the ritual and the structure of the artworks employed therein, but also shapes the behavior of the ritualists themselves. Taking inspiration from Caroline Jones’ account of the “bureaucratization of the senses” in the modern West—in particular, in the art world of post-war New York—I will argue that Buddhist monks themselves become, temporarily, bureaucratic functionaries during the performance of the Water-Land Retreat, yet ultimately transcend that limited role.¹ During the performance of the liturgy, their bodies come to be strictly regulated, their every action determined by their place within a distinctly mid- to late-imperial Chinese conception of the Buddhist cosmos. This bureaucratization of experience is derived from an invasion of all aspects of life both monastic and secular by the bureaucracy of the Chinese state, something that, as we will see, conceptually extended even into the realm of the creation of visual artworks.

¹ See Caroline A. Jones, *Eyesight Alone: Clement Greenberg’s Modernism and the Bureaucratization of the Senses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), esp. xv-xxvii, and 389-435.

Definitions

Before beginning our investigation of the bureaucratization at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat, it may be best to define, in a general way, my conception of bureaucracy. Peter Nickerson, in his study of the place of Daoism in early-medieval Chinese society and the development of its technologies for dealing with the dead,² provides a useful, culturally and historically specific definition of this concept, which, in the classical form outlined by Max Weber, was argued to be an exclusively modern phenomenon.³ Drawing on work by David N. Keightley,⁴ Robert M. Hartwell,⁵ David G. Johnson,⁶ and Michael Dalby,⁷ on the nature of Chinese religion, governmental systems, and familial lineage from the pre- through late-imperial periods, Nickerson proposes that medieval Chinese bureaucracy possessed three particular features:

1) systematic hierarchy (by which I mean organization according to ranks or grades, with those in higher positions possessing greater prestige and/or authority than those in lower ones, and usually involving systems of promotion [or demotion] through those ranks); 2) the articulation of that hierarchy in terms of ‘office’; and 3) the conferral of office, and the conduct of communications among various offices, by means of written documents.⁸

² Peter Samuel Nickerson, “Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy in Early Medieval China,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1996. On the concept of bureaucracy, see esp. 51-55.

³ See Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated and edited by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (1946; reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 196-244.

⁴ David N. Keightley, “The Religious Commitment: Shang Theology and the Genesis of Chinese Political Culture,” *History of Religion* 17, no. 3/4 (February-May 1978): 211-225.

⁵ Robert M. Hartwell, “Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750-1550,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 42, no. 2 (December 1982): 365-442.

⁶ David G. Johnson, *The Medieval Chinese Oligarchy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1977).

⁷ Michael Dalby, Review of “The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China: A Case Study of the Po-ling Ts’ui Family by Patricia Buckley Ebrey,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40, no. 1 (June 1980): 249-263.

⁸ Nickerson, “Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy,” 54-55.

Nickerson argues that this “deliberately inclusive and minimalistic”⁹ definition applies equally well to the terrestrial government of medieval China as it does to the celestial bureaucracy with which Daoist—and, as I will show, Buddhist—ritualists interacted on a frequent basis.

Nickerson’s definition self-consciously excludes the criteria of expertise and specialization that figure at the heart of most modern definitions of the term; this thus allows for the inclusion of the non-meritocratic promotion of officials within the system—e.g., nepotism, or the purchasing of titles—, as well as the shuffling of officials from one unrelated bureaucratic office to another, phenomena ostensibly proscribed in modern bureaucracies. Nevertheless, as we have seen and will see again in greater detail, Song-dynasty Buddhist monks were selected to serve specific bureaucratic functions both in their monasteries and in performances of the Water-Land Retreat based on their particular skills or qualities.¹⁰

To Nickerson’s definition, I would also add a notion of modularity. I conceive of this notion in several ways. On the one hand, I refer to the modular construction of any bureaucratic structure—that is, the replicability of a bureaucratic organizational hierarchy, which allows the structure used in one administrative sector or geographic region of a government or corporation to be directly reproduced in another sector or region. Such modularity thus implies a homology among elements at a given level of the organizational hierarchy, and hence, a certain sense of interchangeability among those elements. This, then, points to a notion of bureaucracy as syntactical—a structure that remains constant despite changes in individual constituent elements. This is a notion to which I have already referred periodically throughout this dissertation in relation to the performative syntax of the Water-Land Retreat, which, I have argued, was treated

⁹ Ibid., 54.

¹⁰ On the qualifications of the monks employed to perform different roles within performances of the Water-Land Retreat, see Chapter 1.1 of this dissertation.

as a modular construct that could be expanded or contracted according to the needs and means of its sponsors and practitioners. Further, I have suggested that the language of the “statement 疏” texts that were composed to describe the circumstances under which, and the goals for which, a particular ritual performance was sponsored also reveal a highly modular conception of textual production and ritual performance across multiple religious traditions during the Song. I will develop these notions further in this part of the dissertation, linking them to the conception of bureaucracy more generally. I will also suggest, in drawing from Lothar Ledderose’s work on the concept of modularity in Chinese art more generally,¹¹ that a sense of bureaucratic modularity underlies both the composition and production of visual artworks crafted for the Water-Land Retreat.

Bureaucratic Peculiarities of the Water-Land Retreat

In seeking to understand the bureaucratic character of the Water-Land Retreat, three particular aspects seem to demand consideration, as they speak especially well to the bureaucratic conceptions of the cosmos and of ritual practice that ultimately seem to lie at its heart. Specifically, I refer to the character of the prefatory rites, such as the dispatching of the Four Tally-Bearing Messengers 持符使者 and the Opening of the Roads of the Five Directions 開通五方五路, two closely connected acts that are included in most variants of the ritual; the extensive use of written documents throughout the performance of the ritual, especially during these prefatory rites; and finally, the nature of the pantheon summoned, which, as we saw particularly in Part 1 of this dissertation, brings together spirits from multiple religious traditions.

¹¹ Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). Particularly useful responses to Ledderose’s work may be found in Lothar von Falkenhausen, “Review of *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*, the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts by Lothar Ledderose,” *Artibus Asiae* 60, no. 2 (2000): 333-348; and Jonathan Hay, “Review of *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art* by Lothar Ledderose,” *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 2 (June 2004): 381-384.

These three peculiarities speak to a conception of the cosmos that dialectically combines multiple worldviews, several of which are structured around fundamentally bureaucratic hierarchies and depend upon bureaucratic means of communication in order to function. Here, I intend first to describe and analyze these prefatory rites and the documents essential to their performance before considering their implications for ritualists' bodily comportment and for the production of visual artworks. Finally, I will examine the bureaucratic character of the pantheon summoned during the Water-Land Retreat and will consider the ways in which that bureaucratic character fundamentally structures the representation of the pantheon in painting. Rather than asserting the straightforward dominance of this bureaucratic vision, I will instead argue that bureaucracy plays a dialectical role within both the performance and the visual imagination of the ritual, ultimately serving as but a means to be transcended in pursuit of other ends.

Prefatory Rites in Zhipan and Zhuhong's Liturgy

It is in the prefatory rites—in particular, in the dispatching of the tally-bearing, document-carrying messengers, which is included in all variants of the Water-Land Retreat except that from Yunnan (which nevertheless includes tales about the importance of alerting the Earth God, City God, and other supramundane functionaries to announce the ritual to ghosts and spirits), and in the opening of the roads of the five directions, which is included in variants of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* 天地明陽水陸齋 tradition—that the bureaucratic forms of practice undergirding the Water-Land Retreat as a whole seem to be given clearest expression. The homilies recited by the Cantor during the performance of these acts in both Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275) and Zhuhong's 祿宏 (1535-1615) *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌 and the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* give particularly clear insight

into the function of and visual imagination informing these rites, so it is on these texts that I will first focus.

The rite of dispatching the Four Messengers is fairly straightforward. Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy, which gives more complete, practical instructions for performing this act, begins by telling the ritualists to place seats for the "Messengers of the Four Tallies 四符使者" near the gate 門首 to the ritual enclosure; tea, fruits, paper money 財馬 (and, at least in contemporary performances, papier-mâché horses) are to be prepared for the use of the messengers, and the various documents of invitation 請書, including petitions 奏狀 and two types of mandates 符牒 • 關牒, are all to be laid out.¹² The Three Treasures 三寶 are invoked, refuge is taken in them, and incense is offered.¹³ Using spell-empowered water, the Cantor 表白 then purifies the desk 几 atop which the messengers' seats have been placed. Next, the Cantor recites a short homily on the need to inform all ends of the cosmos that a Water-Land Retreat is about to be performed.¹⁴ The four messengers—here defined as the Speedy Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Four Heavens 四天捷疾持符使者, the Speedy Tally-Bearing Messenger who Paces the Void 空行捷疾持符使者, the Speedy Tally-Bearing Messenger who Paces the Earth 地行捷疾持符使者, and the Speedy Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Earth Bureau 地府捷疾持

¹² See FJSF, fasc. 1, 787c-789a.

¹³ This offering of incense includes a particularly beautiful image: "Incense is born from the mind, and the mind is reached by incense. Not dwelling in the three ages, it can fill the ten directions 香從心生，心由香達。不居三際，可徧十方." See FJSF, fasc. 1, 788a.

¹⁴ Importantly, in this brief discourse, the Buddha is addressed as the "Awakened Emperor 覺皇," a title that seems to have been rarely used before the Song—in fact, searches of the Taishō Tripitaka 大正新修大藏經 and the *Xuzang jing* 續藏經 suggest that the term was first used in the ninth century but was not used with any frequency until the Song—and that seems to posit the Buddha as an emperor-like figure at the head of the cosmos. See *ibid.* The implications of this will be discussed in greater detail below in relation to the pardons and edicts issued by this newly bureaucratized Buddha.

符使者—are summoned, and “the Ritual Master visualizes that each, with his hundreds and thousands of followers, comes from the void and stands by his seat 法師想使者各有百千眷屬從空而來，依位而立.”¹⁵ The Cantor then praises these messengers who are able to move so deftly among the realms of Heaven and Earth, and after briefly outlining the purpose of the Water-Land Retreat in general and its ultimate goal of universal salvation, he concludes that because the paths of this world and the Netherworld are different, one must rely on these messengers to announce the impending ritual to all beings of the cosmos.¹⁶ Food offerings are presented to the messengers (and with a certain hubris, the Ritual Master 法師 visualizes that “the various spirits descend to enjoy [the food]; none is not pleased 諸神降享，莫不喜悅”¹⁷). Again, the ritualist reiterates the need to rely on the messengers to alert the myriad beings of the cosmos to assemble at the ritual site so that they may be cleansed of past transgressions and may benefit from recitations of the Buddha’s teachings so kindly sponsored by the Sponsor 施主.

The Cantor intones:

The saints and the mundane beings are of the same body, yet the delusion or enlightenment of their minds differs. Today, in holding a retreat and delivering invitations, one might speak of the inequality of coming and responding. It is said that where the Three Treasures and various *devas* reside can be reached with a single thought [or recitation]. But though one may call repeatedly to beings like the masses of the Six Paths, they do not hear. Those whose evil karma is heavy suffer and cannot escape, and those who have seen much evil impede themselves. If one did not rely on the speed of the messengers, how else could the deep kindness of the Sponsor penetrate? As for possessing petitions to present to King Brahma, recording content and form for Indra, [presenting] tallies to the place ruled by [the Emperor] of Mt. Tai of the Earth Bureau, and mandating the various spirits of the lands of the City God—they all look upon the Most Compassionate, that is, they all carry out the Great Pardon.

¹⁵ Ibid., 788b.

¹⁶ Ibid., 788c.

¹⁷ Ibid.

聖凡體同，迷悟心異。今此修齋而致請，或云赴感之不齊，調三寶諸天之居，固一念而可格。如六道羣生之類，有屢呼而弗聞。蓋惡業重者正苦留連，及邪見多者自為障閼。非賴使人之捷疾，曷通施者之勤渠。至若具奏牘以進梵王，錄情文而于帝釋，符地府泰山之所主，關城隍土境之諸神，咸仰體於至慈，即奉行於大赦。¹⁸

In other words, the messengers are necessary in order to ensure that the unenlightened beings of the cosmos do, in fact, make it to the grand feast laid out by the Sponsor. This can only be assured through the proper transmission of documents of a variety of genres. So confident are the ritualists in the efficacy of these messengers and their texts that they assert at the end of this homily, “If you invite them, all must come; not a single one will not arrive. All of one’s meanings and intentions are placed in the text of the tally 有請必來，無一不至。所有意旨，具在符文。”¹⁹ Given such a homily, it appears that the cosmos has become thoroughly bureaucratized. Documents, and the messengers who bear them, are thus essential when communicating with spirits other than those great Buddhist saints who can be summoned solely through the concentration of one’s mind or the recitation of mantras. The benighted beings of our world, then, must be redundantly summoned through both text and oral formulae.

At the conclusion of this homily, two monks come forth and stand on either side of the messengers’ seats.²⁰ They then read the various mandates to be delivered to the many beings of the cosmos, and they envelope them in order based on the rank of the four messengers. The messengers are now prepared to be sent off on their important journeys. Another homily beautifully describes their flight through the cosmos:

Without rushing, they hasten; they feel and then respond. Their majestic visage is like the light of the sun, their divine feet as strong as the movement of Heaven. Driving cloud

¹⁸ Ibid., 788c-789a.

¹⁹ Ibid., 789a.

²⁰ Ibid.

chariots and raising feathered canopies—galloping! whipping! Exhausting the treasure flames and penetrating the wheel of the wind—now climbing! now descending!

不速而疾，有感則通。威容儼日出之光，神足擬天行之健。駕雲較而揚羽葆，載馳載驅。窮寶箴而徹風輪，宜上宜下。²¹

The imagery takes on an almost imperial tone thanks to the use of very specific vocabulary; the chariots driven by these messengers are those of ancient kings, and certain phrases are taken directly from classics of the distant past.²² The tone, in other words, better befits that of a Daoist or state rite than a Buddhist ritual.

Finally, all of the petitions, letters, invitations, and mandates are gathered together and burned.²³ While the Cantor rings his bell to send them off, the Ritual Master visualizes that each of the Four Messengers carries his mandates to his quadrant of the cosmos; in all of the ten directions of this world, no place is not reached. The places of the messengers are then dismantled, and their accoutrements and texts are burned. Importantly, only clean paper and charcoal is to be used to burn these goods; candles and lamps are specifically forbidden to be used to burn offerings, since the oil and wax prevents the paper from burning purely, thus causing it to accumulate in a pile of useless, “waxy money” in the Netherworld. Further, the ritualists are explicitly prohibited from using their staffs 杖 to stoke the burning documents. The gravity, and orthodoxy, of these instructions are underscored by Zhipan and Zhuhong’s directly quoting a netherworldly guardian as their source.

²¹ Ibid.

²² For example, the phrase “galloping! whipping! 載馳載驅” is taken from the *Shi jing* 詩經 (*Book of Odes*). See “Zai chi 載馳,” in the “Yong feng 鄘風” chapter of the “Guo feng 國風” section of the *Mao shi* 毛詩; HJDZ edition.

²³ FJSF, fasc. 1, 789a.

The Four Messengers and Five Paths of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai*

The version of this rite included in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* largely follows the same sequence of acts as that in Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy. However, the hierarchical complexity of the supramundane bureaucracy that structures the rite has become more explicit. For example, the sequence begins by invoking the monastery guardians, who had previously been summoned to guard the site and who now are portrayed as the first in a chain of bureaucratic spirits that convey documents from the officiants at the ritual site to the ends of cosmos. Moreover, it includes a number of passages that very directly, and poetically, treat the use of documents and the reliance on the messengers in the rite. Most importantly, this rite of dispatching the messengers is followed by a rite of invoking the Emperors of the Five Directions, who are supplicated to open the paths upon which the spirits will travel. Given these many differences, as well as the particularly poetic vision embodied in the homilies recited throughout the performance of these rites, our close attention is again warranted.

The visionary implications of these bureaucratic rites—rites whose rational core would seem to exclude the fantastic visions that seem to have been a specialty of the compilers of this manual—are clear from the very first poem recited during the burning of incense that marks the beginning of this series of acts:

In the censer, campaka burns, penetrating the concerns of the mind;
high above, blue-green mists join to form auspicious clouds.
Incense of five fragrances burns, filling the ten directions;
the numinous spirits carrying mandates all receive offerings.

爐焚薝蔔通心事 高徹青霄結瑞雲
香焚五分徧十方 執牒靈神皆供養²⁴

²⁴ TDMY, fasc. 1, 26a.

Water is then empowered, and Ucchuṣma 金剛穢跡 is invoked to subjugate any malevolent spirits. After briefly mentioning all of the types of beings to be summoned, the Cantor reminds us that “one must rely on writs and mandates to invite and welcome [the spirits], and one [must] first depend on [those who] carry tallies to present [those documents] 須憑文牒以邀迎，預假持符而賚往.”²⁵ Thus, the ritualists have prepared offerings for the Tally-Bearing Messengers of the Four Duties 四直持符使者, for only these fleet-footed functionaries are able to

venerate the edicts of the buddhas above, and respond to the minds of humans below. Tirelessly they gallop, waving and bending in divine transformation. Hearing a single tinkle of the golden bell, they mount cyclones and come forth.

上遵佛勅，下應人心。不倦駢馳，屈施神化。聞金鈴之一振，乘飄馭以來臨。²⁶

Next, the local Monastery Earth God 伽藍土地 is summoned, for it is he who is understood as the “Principal Officer of Issuing Mandates 發牒主宰”; in other words, he serves as the principal medium between the ritual practitioners, who routinely supplicate him to protect the monastery, and the grander supramundane bureaucracy of which he is but a low-ranking member. Finally, the Four Messengers—here identified as the Messenger of the Heavenly Realm 天界使者, the Void-Pacing Messenger 空行使者, the Earth-Pacing Messenger 地行使者, and the Messenger of [King] Yama 琰魔使者, titles that differ in form but that remain identical in meaning to those of the Four Messengers employed in Zhipan and Zhuhong’s liturgy—are summoned, though the specific mantras of summoning are again preceded by a length homily that includes a description of the ritual, its purpose, and the deities summoned. As we saw in Chapter 2.1, the messengers are specifically praised for their being able to move so freely among the different realms of the

²⁵ Ibid., 27a.

²⁶ Ibid., 28b.

cosmos, which they accomplish through their reliance on the divine mounts of clouds and dragons. In a rather curious twist, in this liturgy, the Four Messengers, who each have a clear spatial charge given their individual association with a particular quadrant of the cosmos, are also identified with cosmic time-keeping—that is, they are identified as the Messengers in Charge of the Year 年直, Month 月直, Day 日直, and Hour 時直. In other words, space and time are mapped onto each other and embodied within the figures of the Four Messengers. These messengers thus come to represent something like living chronotopes, simultaneously inspecting acts performed at different times while also traveling the cosmos to deliver messages.²⁷ The rather convoluted history that led to the conflation of time and space within these figures will be discussed in detail further below.

Intriguingly, this section of the homily also mentions that the ritualists can “depend only on the messengers *to transmit the sounds* [of the ritual performance, particularly the aurality of the mantras of summoning] 唯賴使者以傳音”²⁸; indeed, they must “first rely on writs and announcements *to transmit the sounds*, and [must] initially depend on [those who] carry tallies to invite and order [the myriad spirits] 先憑文疏以傳音，預假持符而請命.”²⁹ These seemingly insignificant passages imply several important things. Most notably, they point to the notion that the sounds of mantras of summoning—those (pseudo-)Sanskritic oral formulae whose aurality was, precisely, their most important quality, for they were semantically unintelligible to speakers

²⁷ For the classical definition of the chronotope in a literary-historical context, see M. M. Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist, translated by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 84-258. For a discussion of this concept in relation to Buddhist art, see Eugene Y. Wang, “Pagoda and Transformation: The Making of Medieval Chinese Visuality,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1997, and especially, idem, “Chronotope and Heterotopia,” chapter 6 in *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 317-397.

²⁸ TDMY, fasc. 1, 29b.

²⁹ Ibid., 30a.

of both Chinese and Sanskrit—must be transcribed into written form in order to be carried to the myriad beings of the cosmos. This seems to imply a radical critique of the typical conceit in Buddhist ritual that a mantra could be heard by the deity on whom one concentrated, regardless of one’s own location within the cosmos and regardless of that deity’s location. In other words, it seems that the traditional means of Buddhist ritual are no longer sufficient; they must be supplemented through the use of written documents carried by these messengers. A homily intoned after the summoning of the messengers describes the equipment necessary for this new technology of transmission: “Today, we have arrayed pure offerings and prepared a dharma feast; canopies, banners, money, and horses are arrayed among their places, while brushes, inkstones, files, and paper appear atop the seats 今則聊陳淨供，薄備法筵。幢幡錢馬兮列向筵中，筆硯案紙兮呈於座上.”³⁰ While Zhipan and Zhuhong suggested that communication with Buddhist saints could still be achieved through mental concentration and simple recitation, the *Tiandi mingyang shuili yiwén* seems to suggest that this is no longer true; indeed, as we will see in the next section, documents became essential even for communication with those saints, the highest among whom—that is, the Buddha, now conceptualized as an “Awakened Emperor 覺皇”—dispatched bureaucratic writs himself.

This rite of dispatching the messengers ends with an invitation to the Monastery Guardian and the Four Messengers to inspect the sincerity with which the rite is performed. Subsequently, statements are read; though we are not told precisely which statements are indicated, we might assume that they are one of several included in the second fascicle of the

³⁰ Ibid., 31a-31b.

“Miscellaneous Texts 雜文” concerning the messengers and the Monastery Guardian.³¹ Finally, the messengers are sent off, and flowers are offered.

The rite for summoning the Five Emperors of the Five Directions 五方五帝 to open the paths by which spirits will assemble at the ritual site is comparatively abbreviated. It begins with a homily that presents a brief overview of the mythical origins of the Water-Land Retreat in Ānanda’s 阿難 encounter with the Burning-Face Ghost King 面然鬼王 and in Emperor Wu of Liang’s 梁武帝 (464-549; r. 502-549) dream of a saintly monk who revealed the existence of the Water-Land liturgy; further, it explains the universal, non-discriminatory nature of the ritual by glossing the elements of the ritual’s title. Finally, the need to open the paths so that spirits may assemble is mentioned: “The mandates have already been dispatched. If we do not open the Five Roads, I fear that it will be difficult to assemble the ten thousand souls. We soon will invite the divine sovereigns of the five seats, and thus, we have only to rely on esoteric words 發牒已畢。若不開通五路，恐難集會萬靈。將邀五位之神君，故乃唯憑於密語。”³² After reciting an initial mantra of summoning, the Cantor recites a homily whose tone is decidedly that of Daoism, the belief system within which the Five (Directional) Emperors were first conceived³³:

I have heard that the Two Ethers rose and fell, dividing among the Six Harmonies. The Four Dimensions of the Middle Realm prepared the Five Directions. Thereupon, the gods and spirits divided according to office and rank. Today, layman so-and-so exercises his compassionate, donative mind and establishes an Assembly of Heaven and Earth, This World and the Netherworld. If we do not open the Five Roads, I sincerely fear that it will be impossible to assemble the ten thousand souls. Respectfully preparing incense

³¹ See TDMY, “Zawen 雜文,” fasc. 2, 3a-4b.

³² Ibid., 34a.

³³ Some discussion of the origins of the Five Emperors, who were mapped onto rather different pentadic sets of deities in late-imperial China, is given in Michael Szonyi, “The Illusion of Standardizing the Gods: The Cult of the Five Emperors in Late Imperial China,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 56, no. 1 (February 1997): 113-135, esp. 116-117.

and lamps, we first make offerings to humans, *devas*, and Hell-dwellers, to ghosts, animals, and *asuras*. As for those who have yet to reach the seats of the saints, how can they attain superb power? Having crossed boundaries, their thoughts have obstructions and violations. So we first report to the Five Directions, and then universally make our three invitations. We pray only that the Five Emperors of the Five Directions—these gods and spirits of the Five Seats—will grandly open the gate of expedience, and will together assuage the suffering of those who rise and fall. Now we summon, and pray that they all will approach. The Head of the Assembly raises incense and respectfully places it and worships.

蓋聞：二氣昇沉，爰分六合。四維中界，廼備五方。由是神祇，各分司位。是日檀信某，運慈悲喜捨之心，建天地冥陽之會。若不開通於五路，誠恐難集於萬靈。謹具香燈，先伸供養。切為人天地獄，鬼畜修羅。未達聖位之流，豈獲威神自在。經歷分野，慮有障違。所以先告於五方，然後普伸於三請。唯願五方五帝，五位神祇。大開方便之門，共濟昇沉之苦。今當召請，悉願來臨。會首上香，謹當設拜。³⁴

Through this homily, the Cantor thus rehearses the creation of the cosmos, which was predicated on the initial division of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 *qi* 氣. As the cosmos became increasingly divided and more complexly structured, its various spirits divided themselves within it according to a supramundane bureaucratic structure. It is this structure, then, that necessitates the extensive exchange of documents carried out throughout the Water-Land Retreat and, in particular, that necessitates directly propitiating the five high-ranking bureaucrats that control access to the cosmic highway system. Ultimately, the Five Emperors are summoned and they are given their seats and offerings within the ritual enclosure. The Yellow Path 黃道—the cloud-borne road upon which the saintly beings are invited to approach the ritual space, which was discussed extensively in Chapter 2.1 of this dissertation—is then set out, and the true summoning of deities can begin.

From the rites outlined in both Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy and in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, it is clear that a bureaucratic conception of the cosmos and of the means of communicating with its constituents lies at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat. Indeed, properly

³⁴ Ibid., 34b.

dealing with this bureaucratic cosmos seems to be of primary importance in ensuring the success of the ritual; as these multiple homilies suggest, if one does not properly engage with that bureaucracy, the myriad spirits of the cosmos will be unable to assemble at the ritual site, thus rendering the ritual completely ineffective. Consequently, the messenger has become a key figure in this worldview, carrying the documents that summon spirits to assemble at the ritual site. Furthermore, it seems that the ritualist himself has become integrated in this supramundane bureaucracy. It is he who initially gathers the messengers—and, in the case of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai*, it is he who summons the local Monastery Guardian to serve as the first link in this supramundane postal relay—and entrusts the documents to them; it is he, too, who ultimately is responsible for the precise copying of these essential tools of divine communication. While we have previously encountered ritualists who served as specialists in internal visualization and in the external presentation of offerings, we now are able to see the ritualist as a bureaucratic functionary, tied to a desk fitted with “brushes, inkstones, files, and paper 筆硯案紙.” Now it is to the content of those files and papers that we will turn, as within them, certain surprises that nuance our rather straightforward conception of the place of bureaucracy in the Water-Land Retreat are to be found.

The Rise of Bureaucratic Documents in Chinese Buddhism

As we saw briefly in Chapter 1.1 of this dissertation, a complete selection of model texts of the bureaucratic documents to be used in the Water-Land Retreat are included in the two fascicles of “Miscellaneous Texts 雜文” appended to the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*,³⁵ and a small selection of documents are included at the end of the Korean *Suryuk mucha pyeongdeung*

³⁵ See TDMY, “Zawen,” fascs. 1 and 2.

jaeui jeyo 水陸無遮平等齋儀提要.³⁶ Zhipan and Zhuhong's manual includes no such model texts; it is only in Qing-dynasty expansions of the manual, such as the *Shuilu yigui huiben* 水陸儀軌會本³⁷ and the *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun* 法界聖凡水陸大齋普利道場性相通論,³⁸ that such model documents are to be found for this “southern” variant of the ritual. While model documents—in particular, statements on the goals of sponsoring a particular ritual performance—are to be found in some Song-dynasty collections of monastic regulations 清規,³⁹ bureaucratic documents of the types employed in the Water-Land Retreat do not survive in any great number except in anthologies of the Ming and after. However, the “Miscellaneous Texts” of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* begins with a preface in which the date for the composition of the manual is given—namely, 1303, less than twenty-five years after the fall of the Song.⁴⁰ The documents compiled therein have, of course, been edited; most obviously, several documents include a model dateline referring to the “Great Ming Kingdom 大明國,” rather than to the Yuan dynasty under which they ostensibly were first composed. Nevertheless, these model documents remain, perhaps, the texts that most closely preserve traces of the bureaucratic worldview underlying the Song practice of the Water-Land Retreat. Indeed, I will argue that it was, precisely, in the Song that this bureaucratic worldview

³⁶ SR, “Purok 附錄,” 1a-12a, 643-649.

³⁷ SLYGHB, fasc. 4, 22a-47b, 137-149.

³⁸ *Fajie shengfan shuilu dazhai puli daochang xingxiang tonglun* 法界聖凡水陸大齋普利道場性相通論, compiled by Zhiguan 咫觀 (act. mid nineteenth century), in X74, no. 1498, fasc.1, 829a-831b.

³⁹ See below.

⁴⁰ TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 1, 1a.

captured the imagination of Buddhist followers, a phenomenon attested as much (and perhaps earlier) in image as in text.

Significantly, this early-Yuan preface to the “Miscellaneous Texts” directly speaks to the Water-Land Retreat’s seeming obsession with documents of the types transmitted by the Four Messengers. It begins:

How grand are the uses of texts! Thus, whenever one offers sacrifices [to deities and ancestors], one must use edicts to report to them; otherwise, one will not see the ritual brought to fruition. The manual for the Water-Land Retreat was composed by Emperor Wu, surnamed Xiao, himself in the *Fayun dian* [Hall of the Cloud of the Dharma], and it is completely drawn from the meanings of the Tathāgata’s storehouse of texts. Certainly, one cannot use the words and language of this world to embellish it. As for phrases of summoning, etc., if one does not rely on texts to pattern them, how else could one move Heaven and Earth and stimulate ghosts and spirits? How can we help but use texts?

文之為用大矣哉。故凡禱祠之際，必具用冊書以告之。不然未見其成禮也。水陸儀文，蕭武於法雲殿親自著述，悉取如來藏典之義。固不可以世間文字語言潤色之也。至如請召等語，非假文以文之，何以動天地，感鬼神，文其可以已乎？⁴¹

According to the *Wuwai Weida* 無外惟大 (act. ca. 1300), the author of this preface, texts have always been at the heart of Chinese ritual practice, both Buddhist and otherwise, and documents have always been essential for communicating with deities. Indeed, the “Miscellaneous Texts” fascicles compiled by Weida give us an almost dizzying array of documents to be used during the ritual—from the “essay 文” that explains the origin of the ritual, to the “memorials and petitions 表章” presented to the Awakened Emperor (the Buddha), the Heavenly Immortals 天仙, the Spirits of the Earth 地祇 and the Water Bureau 水府, and the Kings of the Netherworld 冥王; from the “memorials 申奏” to the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王, to the “proclamations 詔” of the

⁴¹ Ibid. This passage is cited in Dai Xiaoyun 戴曉雲, *Fojiao shuiluhua yanjiu* 佛教水陸畫研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2009), 32. Hou Chong 侯沖, *Yunnan Azhali jiao jingdian yanjiu* 雲南阿吒力教經典研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shuji chubanshe, 2008), 58, also cites this passage but punctuates the final line as follows: “至如請召等，語非假文，以文之何以動天地，感鬼神，文其可以已乎。”

Awakened Emperor; from the “pardons 赦” of the Three Treasures, to the “placards 榜” posted by the various altars and implements of the ritual space; and from the more general class of “statements 疏” to the “mandates 牒” issued to the lowest, albeit functionally most important, deputies of the terrestrial bureaucracy. The second fascicle also includes instructions for properly addressing and enveloping the documents, as well as a model certificate to record the precepts bestowed on the wandering ghosts saved during the ritual.⁴²

A division of labor is set up among the various types of texts.⁴³ The memorials serve to invite the various classes of beings to assemble at the ritual space and are to be dispatched directly to the beings in their various abodes throughout the cosmos. The statements more directly state or describe the summoning of the various spirits, and they are recited and burned during the actual rites of summoning. The mandates are directed solely to lesser beings in the cosmic bureaucracy who have direct bearing on the ritual proceedings; specifically, they order that the local weather gods 風伯雨師, Earth Gods (伽藍)土地, and City God 城隍 protect the ritual site during the performance, and they direct the Four Messengers to diligently carry the memorials and inspect the sincerity of the ritual performance. Finally, the placards essentially describe the function of the various ritual implements and spatial zones to members of the ritual-observing public. There is, then, a relatively high degree of redundancy between the documents

⁴² The final pages of the fascicle are, in fact, devoted to the two translations of the *Sutra on Burning-Mouth Hungry Ghosts* by Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (act. late seventh to early eighth century) and Amoghavajra 不空 (705-774). See TDMY, “Zawen,” 28a-32a. For the canonical texts, see *Fo shuo jiu mianran egui tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 佛說救面然餓鬼陀羅尼神咒經, translated by Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (act. late seventh to early eighth century), in T21, no. 1314; and *Fo shuo jiuba yankou egui tuoluoni jing* 佛說救拔焰口餓鬼陀羅尼經, translated by Amoghavajra 不空 (705-774), in T21, no. 1313.

⁴³ For an introduction to the use of similar documents in the pre-modern Daoist ritual context, see Shih-shan Susan Huang, *Picturing the True Form: Daoist Visual Culture in Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012), 231-239. A more extended account of the use of documents in modern Daoist ritual, including full translations of several representative document types, may be found in Kristofer M. Schipper, “The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremonies,” in *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, edited by Arthur P. Wolf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 309-324.

and the ritual performance itself; the Cantor's homilies accord closely with the content of the documents, and each sometimes directly borrows phrases from the other. There exists further redundancy among the content of the various types of documents: memorials and statements are often both issued to a single class of beings, as is also true of mandates and statements. They all reiterate one another to a certain degree, though their intended functions differ.

The logic behind the use of these different classes of texts is directly addressed by Bingxue Rude 冰雪如德, a Ming-dynasty monk who compiled the *Yasu tongyong Shimen shu shi* 雅俗通用釋門疏式 (*Model Statements of the Śākya Gate to be Used by Elites and Commoners Alike*), which “brings together the model [texts] bequeathed by the sages of the Song, as well as [those] from the *Anshi xuzhi* [*Necessary Knowledge about the Affairs of Hermitages*, compiled by the Yuan-dynasty Chan master Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263-1323)⁴⁴] 集宋賢遺範，及庵事須知.”⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, this compendium of model texts for use in Buddhist rituals gathered a number of documents concerning the Water-Land Retreat. Fundamentally, Bingxue Rude suggests that the use of such documents goes back to secular governmental practice, where each class of document implied a particular hierarchical relationship between the petitioner and the petitioned. Rude, who ultimately was most concerned with ensuring the

⁴⁴ This text is now better known as the *Huanzhu an qinggui* 幻住庵清規 (*Pure Regulations of the Retreat of Illusory Abiding*). See *Huanzhu an qinggui* 幻住庵清規, compiled by Zhongfeng Mingben 中峰明本 (1263-1323), in X63, no. 1248.

⁴⁵ See Bingxue Rude 冰雪如德, *Yasu tongyong Shimen shu shi* 雅俗通用釋門疏式, fasc. 1, “Shu shi fanli 疏式凡例,” 1a, in *Meiguo Hafo daxue Hafo Yanjing tushuguan cang zhongwen shanben huikan* 美國哈佛大學哈佛燕京圖書館藏中文善本彙刊 (Beijing and Guilin: Shangwu yinshuguan and Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 2003), vol. 33, 242. This text is introduced, and its preface punctuated, in Hou Chong 侯沖, *Yunnan azhali jiao jingdian yanjiu* 雲南阿吒力教經典研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo guji chubanshe, 2008), 264-275. Only two fascicles of a Ming-dynasty woodblock-printed edition survive in the Harvard-Yenching Library collection. The full ten fascicles, in six booklets, of a Ming-dynasty woodblock-printed edition survive in the collection of the Waseda University Library 早稻田大學圖書館; a digitized version is available at <http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko19/bunko19_f0233/index.html>. However, the first fascicle of the Waseda edition lacks the “Notes 凡例” included at the beginning of the Harvard-Yenching copy.

proper use of documents, thus outlines not only the history of their use, but also a vision of how contemporary practice should be reformed to return it to orthodoxy:

“Memorials” are texts that officials hand up to sovereigns. [Yet] everywhere [people] imprudently mix in the use of memorials. Even in blood sacrifices to gods and spirits on their birthdays, golden memorials are always used to express congratulations, which is especially indecorous. Now, this will be reformed. Only for the Buddha and the Four Emperors of Heaven, Earth, Water, and the *Yang* Realm should one use memorials; for all the others, one should use “statements.” This is truly fitting.

表者乃人臣上君之辭。諸方不審。一槩混以表用。甚至一切血食神祇生日，悉金表賀，殊為失體，今悉革去。惟佛與天地水陽四帝則用表，其餘皆通用疏，甚為得體。⁴⁶

Bingxue Rude even suggested that the fundamentally secular nature of these texts be remembered when composing them, encouraging that “one should express wishes for the longevity [of the emperor] at the head of a statement to show that one dares not forget the blessings of the state, king, water, and earth 以祝延聖壽冠于疏首者，示不敢忘國王水土之恩也。”⁴⁷

As part of this general concern with the proper use of different classes of documents, Bingxue Rude further commented on the difference between statements and mandates, whose precise uses could sometimes be confused. The statement ultimately is the most flexible of the genres of documents used in the Water-Land Retreat, and it is one of the few types of documents that routinely appear in other ritual contexts, as well. Having observed the use of statements in various contexts, Rude suggests that statements could replace, and not merely supplement, mandates. In regard to rites of food bestowal, which themselves are at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat, he thus notes:

⁴⁶ *Yasu tongyong Shimen shu shi*, fasc. 1, “Shu shi fanli 疏式凡例,” 1a, in *Meiguo Hafo daxue*, vol. 33, 242.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The Burning-Mouth Universal Salvation Ritual does not use mandates but instead uses statements. This is not merely a [practiced based on] superficial opinion. According to the Water-Land Manual compiled by Zhongfeng [Mingben], one never uses mandates, and the *Anshi xuzhi* also only uses the single “Jinji shu” [“Salvific Statement”]. Addressing all the myriad buddhas and spirits, it is extremely detailed. And therein, there are opening phrases, etc., that ensure that all the sentient ghosts are able to hear at least a few words or half a *gāthā*, thus allowing them all to attain awakening, so that they may escape the wheel of suffering. This is most correct. Thus, I have not dared to add or remove a single character in Master Zhongfeng’s “Jinji shu.” For the Ghost Kings of the Thirty-Six Sections, each [now] has a mandate; on the container for the mandate, only writing “Submitted to Ghost King So-and-So of Section Such-and-Such” is most proper. [However,] if all are stuck in common convention, there is no harm in using the mandates of the Mengshan Food Bestowal.

焰口普度不用牒而用疏者，非臆見也。按中峰纂水陸科皆不用牒，而庵事須知亦只用津濟疏一通，遍白諸佛神眾，極為詳細。且于中有開示等語，俾一切有情由子，得聞片言半偈皆得開悟，以脫苦輪最為得理。故予于中峰老師津濟疏一字不敢增減。而三十六部鬼王，則各具牒一宗，牒筒籤上只書某部某鬼神王部下最為得體。若有一等溺于俗套者，不妨以蒙山施食牒擔用亦可。⁴⁸

By the Ming, then, the function of different documents was subject to intense debate, and as we shall see in detail later in this chapter, partisans of both streamlined efficiency, such as Bingxue Rude, and complete precision argued strongly against each other. However, although Bingxue Rude’s prefaces provide a useful introduction to the general usage of documents in Buddhist ritual, particularly giving us a sense of their origins and a Ming understanding of the orthodoxy of Song and Yuan practice, his rather reformist vision of Buddhist bureaucracy proves quite different from the vision embodied in the actual documents employed in the Water-Land Retreat.

Specification and Redundancy in Statements and Mandates

With this general sense of certain issues involved in the use of documents at least as seen through the eyes of a Ming commentator on Song and Yuan practice in mind, I now would like to turn to the precise content of the various documents found in the “Miscellaneous Texts” of the *Tiandi mingyang shuiliu yiwen*. I intend to focus particularly on documents associated with the

⁴⁸ *Yasu tongyong Shimen shu shi*, fasc. 1, “Shu shi fanli,” 2a-2b, in *Meiguo Hafo daxue*, vol. 33, 242.

most bureaucratic of rites in the Water-Land Retreat—namely, those of sending off the Messengers and opening the Five Roads—for which statements and mandates are of particular importance. I will then turn my attention to the category of edicts and pardons, documents that hold perhaps the greatest implications for understanding the conception of the cosmos underlying the Water-Land Retreat and that became the subject of intense controversy among reformers of both Buddhist and, surprisingly, Daoist practice.

The second fascicle of the “Miscellaneous Texts” contains both statements and mandates, and, as noted above, in many cases, multiple statements and mandates are all directed to the same spirit. Each version of the same document type is generally crafted to enlist that particular spirit to perform a different task. Thus, the local Earth God might be mandated both to protect the ritual site from baleful influences and to convey documents to the rest of the netherworldly bureaucracy. The statements general consist of five sections. They begin with praise, either of the deities to be summoned or of the Buddha (perhaps with the understanding that it is the Buddha’s teachings that have enabled the performance of the ritual and that it is ultimately the Buddha who is the head of the cosmos in which these deities find their place). For example, in the case of the Four Messengers, it is their speed that is extolled.⁴⁹ These statements of praise segue into a discussion of the particular function of the spirits to be summoned. Again, with regard to the Four Messengers, it is their ability to flit through the universe, penetrating all realms as they carry the documents with which they are charged, that is emphasized⁵⁰; while in the statements on the Earth God and City God, both of whom are addressed with two statements, their ability to transmit announcements about the ritual to other spirits is addressed in one

⁴⁹ TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 2, 3a.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

document,⁵¹ while their role in defending the altar is addressed in the other.⁵² Next, details about this particular ritual performance are given, and it is emphasized that the preparations of the altar have been completed so that the spirits can be summoned. In some cases, the name of the sponsor, the title of the ritual, its date, and its length are all given, while in others, some of these details are omitted, perhaps implying that the same model document might be able to be used in multiple rituals.⁵³ The spirits are then “invoked with one mind 一心奉請.” Finally, a prayer addressed to the spirits is given, typically involving both descriptive praise and specific requests. With regard to the messengers, for example, it is said that “we pray that with colored mists covering their body, they will come to receive the mandates and edicts of the Dharma King; with bits of cloud shrouding their feet, they will memorialize the numinous spirits of this world and the Netherworld 伏願，彩霧蒙身，來受法王牒勅。片雲襯足，奉奏幽顯靈祇。”⁵⁴ The statement is then dated, signed, and “respectfully stated 謹疏.” A sense of the modularity of textual production is introduced to these documents through explicit instructions to reuse certain sections of one statement in the next,⁵⁵ and some documents directly copy phrases from the homilies orally recited by the Cantor.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Ibid., 3b and 4b.

⁵² Ibid., 4a and 5a.

⁵³ For example, the first “Qing shizhe tudi shu 請使者土地[疏]” (“[Statement] on Inviting the Messengers and Earth God”), in *ibid.*, 3b-4a, omits the title of the ritual.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 3a.

⁵⁵ For example, in the second “Yubao chenghuang zhenzai [shu] 預報城隍真宰[疏]” (“[Statement] on Alerting the Perfected Official of Walls and Moats”), the copyist is directed to include the same expression of intent used in the statement for wind and rain gods. See *ibid.*, 5a.

⁵⁶ Compare, for example, *ibid.*, 6b-7a, with TDMY, fasc. 1, 34b.

The mandates take a different format, though they, too, consist of five basic sections. Each begins with a precise record of the address of the place where the ritual is being performed. The purpose of performing the ritual is then explained. In the case of deities tasked with the transmission of documents, the various implements, offerings, and paraphernalia that have been prepared for the performance of the ritual are listed, and the classes of spirits to be summoned by that deity (or which that deity is ordered to allow to assemble at the ritual site) are listed in full. The reasons why the spirit is being mandated are then explained, and finally, the spirit is mandated to perform that specific task. The majority of the mandates deal specifically with commanding the spirits to transmit documents, to promulgate their contents, and to ensure that Buddha's edicts are immediately followed. As noted above, multiple mandates are issued to the same spirit, each giving the spirit a different charge. For example, the local Earth God is mandated both to protect the altar and to transmit documents to the City God⁵⁷; while the City God is mandated to transmit documents to the spirits of local graveyards, to summon the deceased members of the Sponsor's family, and to transmit documents to summon wandering ghosts.⁵⁸ The Four Messengers, meanwhile, are mandated to transmit documents to all of the beings of the cosmos either collectively—as is recorded in the longest mandate of any included in the *Tiandi mingyang shuili zawen*, which also includes the most complete description of the altar preparations⁵⁹—or individually. Rather curiously, the individual messengers are mandated

⁵⁷ See “Dang jing Tudi [die] (qixing huzhu) 當境土地[牒] 乞行護助” (“[Mandate] to the Local Earth God [Request to Guard and to Aid]”) in TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 2, 17b, and “You (zhuan die Chenghuang) 又轉牒城隍” (“Ibid. [Transmitting the Mandate to the City God]”), in *ibid.*, 17b-18a.

⁵⁸ See “Ben zhou Chenghuang zhushi [die] 本州城隍主司[牒]” (“[Mandate] to the City God of the Local Prefecture”), in *ibid.*, 18a-19a; “You (zhao jiaqin) 又召家親” (“Ibid. [Summoning Family Members]”), in *ibid.*, 19a-19b; and “You (zhui guhun) 又追孤魂” (“Ibid. [Aiding the Lonely Souls]”), in *ibid.*, 19b-20a.

⁵⁹ See “Zong die Si da chifu shizhe (huo ge fa wendie) 總牒四大持符使者或各發文牒” (“Comprehensive Mandate to the Four Talisman-Bearing Messengers [or a mandate can be remitted to each]”), 20a-21b.

first by their spatial title—for example, as the Messenger of the Four Heavens⁶⁰—and a second time by their temporal title—for example, as the Messenger in Charge of the Year.⁶¹ The mandates seem to differ in form but not in content, as in both cases the messengers are mandated to transmit documents to summon the myriad beings of the cosmos. The Messenger in Charge of the Hour, however, is mandated twice—once to summon the officials of the Netherworld and members of the lower three paths of rebirth, and once to summon wandering ghosts.⁶² The chronotopic identity of this messenger is also directly mentioned in these mandates, as he is referred to as the “Messenger of [the Realm of] Yama in Charge of the Hour 時直琰魔使者.”⁶³

From the above survey, it becomes clear that within the context of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai*, statements are documents of summoning, while mandates treat the specific functions that spirits are tasked to fulfill. Nevertheless, as we saw in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation, the genre of the statement was one with decidedly malleable boundaries, serving more generally as an expression of the circumstances under which a particular ritual performance was sponsored⁶⁴; consequently, a great number of such documents were penned by laity and clerics alike. The precise origins of the genre became an issue of great concern to the late-Ming Caodong 曹洞 monk Yongjue Yuanxian 永覺元賢 (1578-1657), who, like Bingxue Rude, compiled a volume

⁶⁰ See “Sitian shizhe [die] 四天使者[牒]” (“[Mandate] to the Messenger of the Four Heavens”), in *ibid.*, 21b-22a.

⁶¹ See “Nianzhi shizhe [die] 年直使者[牒]” (“[Mandate] to the Messenger in Charge of the Year”), in *ibid.*, 23a-23b.

⁶² See “Shizhi shizhe 時直使者” [“Messenger in Charge of the Hour”], in *ibid.*, 24b, and “You (she jiao louluo wangling) 又設醮漏落亡靈” (“Ibid. [Holding an Offering Ritual for the Forgotten Deceased Souls]”), in *ibid.*, 24b-25a.

⁶³ “Shizhi shizhe 時直使者,” in *ibid.*, 24b.

⁶⁴ I wonder whether many of the statements passed down in the collected writings of scholar-officials might not be akin to the “expressions of intent 意旨” that were meant to be inserted into the model statements included in a text like the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zawen*. Certainly, as we saw, some scholar-officials’ statement include long descriptions of altar preparations that resonate with that which we see in these model statements; however, others are so brief that one cannot help but imagine that they must have been meant to be inserted into a longer model document.

of his own statements to serve as models for others. Lamenting that when tasked with writing such texts as young monk, he had no models to follow, he collected his own works in order to spare others the frustrations he had experienced. Unlike Rude, whose volume was explicitly intended for the use of both “elites and commoners 雅俗通用,” Yuanxian seems to have intended his statements only for monastic use. Importantly for us, however, he comments on the origins and decline of the practice of writing statements in monasteries. He recounts:

The statements of the Chan School were not crafted by the Buddha, nor by the patriarchs. It is only since the time that this land has had monks, who lead the sentient masses to return to the Ocean of the Buddha, that one has had to take recourse to statements to express matters and thoughts. Thus, the use of statements has been long. In the monasteries of the Tang and Song periods, they particularly valued this duty. If one were not both exceptionally talented and learned, one would not be given to compose them. Since entering into the Ming, those within the sangha who can do this are truly rare, but it is only because they continue to use old texts and corrupt phrases and are careless in social interactions.

禪林之有疏語，非佛制也，亦非祖制也。但此土有僧以來，引群生以歸佛海，其間表事陳情則必有藉于疏。故疏之為用其來已久。在唐宋時叢林中特重是職，非才學兼優者莫與其選。入明以來僧中堪此職者實鮮，但因襲陳文腐語苟且應酬而已。⁶⁵

Yuanxiao's sense of history seems to be generally correct; as we saw in Part 1 of this dissertation, statements were composed in great numbers by members of both secular and monastic elites during the Song. Further, while “statements” written on the occasion of particular ritual performances do survive from before the Song—for example, approximately a dozen penned by the Tiantai master Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597) are included in the *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄 (*One Hundred Records from Guoqing Monastery*),⁶⁶ and several written by laymen are compiled in the

⁶⁵ “Chanlin shuyu xiaoyin 禪林疏語小引,” in *Chanlin shuyu kaozheng* 禪林疏語考證, compiled by Yongjue Yuanxian 永覺元賢 (1578-1657), fasc. 1, in X63, no. 1252, 677a.

⁶⁶ See *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄, compiled by Guanding 灌頂 (561-632), in T49, no. 1934.

Quan Tang wen 全唐文 (*Complete Prose of the Tang*)⁶⁷—it seems not to have been until the Song that statements were produced and preserved in any great number, especially by lay people.

The centrality of statements, and bureaucratic documents more generally, to monastic life—and in particular, to monastic bureaucracy—in the Song becomes especially clear when we look through the various monastic codes 清規 that were compiled in the period. The *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規 (*Pure Regulations of the Chan Courtyard*), which was compiled by the Water-Land proponent Zongze 宗謁 (act. ca. 1100) in 1103 and remains the earliest extant Chinese monastic code, was crafted for use in public monasteries during the Song and includes extensive instructions regarding the writing and receiving of letters, and regarding procedures for promotion to and retirement from positions within the monastery, all of which invariably required extensive documentation.⁶⁸ Further, the code mentions the composition of a statement for almost every public event, from major rituals to the frequent vegetarian feasts 齋 sponsored by lay people. One particular monk, the “scribe [or, more literally, the “letter-writer”] 書狀,” was specifically tasked with the composition and copying of all documents for the monastery, including letters, statements, placards, etc. He was expected to be highly literate, and the code notes that “he should read widely—ancient and modern correspondence, poetry, and prose—to improve his knowledge 古今書啟疏詞文字，應須遍覽以益多聞.”⁶⁹ Although the *Chanyuan*

⁶⁷ See, for example, Choe Chiwon 崔致遠 (857-951), “Qiu hua xiu Dayun si shu 求化修大雲寺疏,” in *Quan Tang shiyi* 全唐拾遺, fasc. 41, in *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文, compiled by Dong Gao 董誥 (1740-1818) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 10840b; HJDZ edition.

⁶⁸ See Zongze 宗謁 (act. ca. 1100), *Chanyuan qinggui* 禪苑清規, 1103, in X63, no. 1245. For a full, annotated translation, as well as an informative introduction to the text, its influences, its impact, and monastic life in the Song, see Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan qinggui* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ “Shuzhuang 書狀,” in Zongze, *Chanyuan qinggui*, 1103, fasc. 3, in X63, no. 1245, 532a. Translation from Yifa, 159.

qinggui includes no model texts for the composition of such letters and statements, most of its contemporaries and successors—including the late-Song *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要 (*Complete Essentials of the Annotated Pure Regulations of the Grove [of Monasteries]*)⁷⁰ and the Yuan-period *Huanzhu an qinggui* 幻住庵清規 (*Pure Regulations of the Retreat of Illusory Abiding*), which was one of the major sources for Bingxue Rude's *Yasu tongyong Shimen shushi*—do, their sheer number and variety reinforcing one's impression that proper documentation and record-keeping was an essential aspect of monastic life in the period. Further, these texts often include precise instructions about the type and quality of paper and ink to be used for particular documents, thus reifying the hierarchy of document types at the level of the materiality of the documents themselves. This vast, multi-layered web of bureaucratic paperwork was only further complicated by the demands that the state placed on monasteries. As Yifa, relying on the great body of research on state control of the Buddhist monastic establishment during the Song carried out by Chinese and Japanese scholars over the past several decades, discusses, the state regulated the sale of ordination certificates, the appointment of abbots, the conversion of monasteries from private 甲乙 to public 十方 status, and the issuing of travel permits—all of which involved the production of vast quantities of paperwork by both the governmental and monastic authorities.⁷¹ To be an officially ordained monk—and especially, to be a high-ranking monk in a public monastery—during the Song was, in a sense, to be bureaucratized—to have one's existence justified through state documentation and to constantly

⁷⁰ See *Conglin jiaoding qinggui zongyao* 叢林校定清規總要, compiled by Weimian 惟勉 (act. late thirteenth century), 1274, in X63, no. 1249. See also *Chixiu baizhang qinggui* 敕修百丈清規, compiled by Dehui 德輝 (act. early fourteenth century), 1335, in T48, no. 2025; *Chanlin beiyong qinggui* 禪林備用清規, compiled by Yixian 弋咸 (act. late thirteenth century), 1282, in X63, no. 1250; and the Tiantai monastic code, *Zengxiu jiaoyuan qinggui* 增修教苑清規, compiled by Ziqing 自慶 (act. mid fourteenth century?), ca. 1347 (?), in X57, no. 968.

⁷¹ See esp., Yifa, 74-86.

participate in the creation and exchange of paperwork documenting all aspects of monastic affairs.

Edicts and Pardons of the “Awakened Emperor”

While the bureaucratic tenor of the Water-Land Retreat undeniably resonates with the more this-worldly practices of ritualists’ monastic homes, the picture begins to become even more intriguing when we look beyond this world to examine the transcendental figure that stands at the pinnacle of the cosmos constructed through these documents—that is, the Buddha. Rather curiously, many of the documents in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zawen* refer to the Buddha not merely as a “buddha 佛” or “tathāgata 如來,” but also as the “Awakened Emperor.” Importantly, a memorial is specifically presented to this Emperor—the only explicitly Buddhist deity to be textually supplicated in the Water-Land Retreat⁷²—, and a model for an edict remitted by him is also included in the first fascicle of the “Miscellaneous Texts.” The structure of this “Memorial to the Awakened Emperor 覺皇文表” establishes a model shared by the memorials to all of the classes of beings—the Heavenly Immortals,⁷³ the Earth Gods,⁷⁴ the spirits of the Water Bureau,⁷⁵ and the Kings of the Netherworld.⁷⁶ The memorial begins with indirect praise of the Buddha; his name is never directly mentioned, though from the references to this being’s compassion 慈, his

⁷² See TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 1, 5a-5b. Other Buddhist deities, including bodhisattvas and arhats, are also addressed in this memorial that is specifically presented to the Awakened Emperor.

⁷³ Ibid., 5b-6a.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 6a-6b.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 6b-7a.

⁷⁶ Three memorials concerning the Kings of the Netherworld are included: the “Mingwang shengzhong wenbiao 冥王聖眾文表” (“Memorial to the Sainly Assembly of Netherworld Kings”), which petitions the kings and their staff (ibid., 7a-7b); the “Shiwang qian xuandu shenzou 十王前宣讀申奏” (“Petition to Be Read Before the Ten Kings”), which announces the intention of the Sponsor and officiating monks to repent on behalf of the myriad ghosts so that they may be reborn in the Pure Land (ibid., 8a-8b); and the “Qing shiwang shengzhong 請十王聖眾” (“Invitation to the Sainly Assembly of the Ten Kings”), whose structure is closer to that of a “statement” (ibid., 8b).

perfection of the six roots of the senses 六根, etc., it is clear that it is the Buddha who is being praised.⁷⁷ The scribe then begs to be allowed to memorialize, “bowing his head and respectfully speaking 頓首謹言,” specifying his location in the “Great Ming Kingdom 大明國” on the “Southern Continent of Jambudvīpa 南瞻部州.” He “again worships and burns incense, and ever so respectfully memorializes and summons 再拜焚香，謹謹奏請” the “World-Honored Śākyamuni, the Founder of the Teachings of the Sahā [World] and the Great Saintly Awakened Emperor 娑婆教主大聖覺皇釋迦世尊,” the Five Wisdom Tathāgatas 五智如來, the Eight Great Bodhisattvas, the thousand bodhisattva-monks 菩薩僧, the *pratyekabuddhas* 辟支迦, the arhats 阿羅漢, the *vidyārājas* 明王, and the dharma-protectors of the various heavens 諸天護法之神. Next, the scribe prays that these saints will hear the sounds of summoning and will manifest in the ritual space, thus transforming the space into a Pure Land wherein all sentient beings will themselves become buddhas.⁷⁸ Ultimately, at the risk of “offending 干冒” these saints, the “common, ignorant 凡愚濁質” *śramaṇa* “respectfully petitions with reverence and awe, bowing his head again and again 誠惶誠惶，頓首敦首，謹奏” on such-and-such day of such-and-such month in such-and-such year.

This basic structure remains the same throughout the remaining memorials, and much of the humble language by which the scribe refers to his act of petitioning is preserved unchanged from one memorial to the next; the opening praises, the lists of spirits summoned, and the concluding prayers regarding the assembly of the spirits at the ritual site—prayers that make extensive use of the vehicular cloud imagery that we examined in Chapter 2.1 in the context of

⁷⁷ Ibid., 5a.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 5b.

the homilies recited during the rite—are adapted to the type of spirits summoned. Interestingly, almost all of the spirits summoned—with the conspicuous exception of the Buddhist deities mentioned in the “Memorial of the Awakened Emperor,” save the Awakened Emperor Śākyamuni himself—have a bureaucratic title of some sort; they are “kings 王,” “masters 主,” “sovereigns 君,” “officers 宰,” etc. In other words, a clear division is established between the non-bureaucratic deities of the Buddhist cosmos—deities of a decidedly more ethereal sort, who, as we saw in the murals at Qinglong si (Figure 2.2), the hanging scrolls from Baoning si (Figure 3.1), and the fifteenth-century Water-Land prints (Figure 2.23), are invariably represented manifesting before billowing banks of clouds as though suddenly appearing in an immaterial vision—and the bureaucratic deities of the Daoist, state, and vernacular traditions—the deities who must rely on vehicular clouds to carry their material bodies to assemble in the ritual space beneath the incorporeal buddhas above (Figures 2.13, 2.19, and 3.2). The Buddha, of course, remains the all-important exception, at least in the documents. He becomes expediently bureaucratized, granted a title that transforms him into the overlord to whom all of the lesser deities and spirits are subordinated, while he simultaneously remains a more transcendental being honored by Buddhist beings. Throughout all of the various types of documents compiled in the “Miscellaneous Texts,” Śākyamuni is rather consistently referred to as the “Awakened Emperor,” thus constantly reaffirming his newly bureaucratic identity.

It is as an “emperor,” then, that he is able to issue “edicts 詔牒” and “pardons 赦書.” Whereas in his more typical guise as a “Tathāgata 如來” or “World-Honored One 世尊,” the invocation of his universal compassion alone would be sufficient to ensure the salvation of Hell-dwellers and wandering ghosts, now, in his newly bureaucratic identity—an identity affirmed primarily through the documents submitted by the ritualists (rather than through the homilies that

they recite)⁷⁹—he himself begins to remit such bureaucratic soteriological writs. It is just such an edict and such a pardon that are included at the end of the first fascicle of “Miscellaneous Texts.” The first of these, entitled the “Edict of the Awakened Emperor 覺皇詔牒” is to be “reported to the Masters of the [Bureaux] of Earth and Water, Purgatory, and the Various Great [Earth] Prisons 告聞地水重[中?]陰諸大牢獄主者.”⁸⁰ The edict begins with the “Po diyu zhenyan 破地獄真言” (“Mantra of Breaking the Earth Prisons”) from the *Avataṃsaka Sutra*. It then establishes a parallel between a this-worldly emperor’s pardoning crimes and the Buddha’s doing so for the denizens of the Netherworld, thus allowing them to ascend toward awakening. Next, it is announced that a pardon will be issued to absolve a particular deceased soul of sins and to carry him over to rebirth in the Pure Land. Further, it gives a generic list of the ancestors of the Sponsor, as well as a detailed list of various types of ghosts and Hell-dwellers, “commanding that they [all] be released from the barred gates of the springs [of the Netherworld], [so that] all may arrive at the Treasure Altar; and that they be led to be moistened with merit, [so that] all may gain ascension 詔命授出泉扃，俱屆寶壇。領霑功德，咸獲超昇.”⁸¹ These same general sentiments are repeated twice more, and the edict concludes by ordering that the “Masters of the Nether-realm quickly carry this out, continuing to mandate their followers. Wherever this mandate reaches, may they uphold the Buddha’s edict 陰境主者，疾速施行，仍關合屬，去處牒到，奉行佛勅.”⁸²

⁷⁹ The Buddha is also referred to as “Awakened Emperor” in several of the homiletic invocations of the Earth God, who is summoned to transmit bureaucratic documents, but the title appears only rarely in other homilies. It is, however, also used in TDMY, fasc. 3, 27a, in the context of pardoning the myriad beings of the cosmos.

⁸⁰ TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 1, 31a-32b.

⁸¹ Ibid., 31b.

⁸² Ibid., 32a.

The pardon, meanwhile, begins by proclaiming itself to be “a pardon remitted from the midst of the Gate of the Three Treasures to the Infernal Officials of the Earth Bureau of Mt. Dai, Fengdu 三寶門中赦書行下酆都岱山地府冥司.”⁸³ First claiming that only the Buddha can save sentient beings, it begins by describing the benightedness and suffering of ghosts and Hell-dwellers, who are themselves ultimately responsible for their fate. It then tells us that the “Buddha’s power can penetrate the vast Yellow Springs, and his boat of compassion can cross the boundless Sea of Suffering 黃泉渺渺，佛力可通。苦海茫茫，慈舟可渡。” The text thus turns to praising his salvific power.⁸⁴ Next, the date of the ritual is mentioned, and it is stated that the ritual will get rid of these various transgressions. The “Awakened Emperor’s *Dhāraṇī* for Dispelling the Rancorous Debts of the Hundred Beings, Promulgated as an Expedient Means 覺皇有大方便宜說解百生冤債陀羅尼” is then recorded—its fundamentally auditory power presumably to be activated when the pardon is read aloud—, and homage is paid to the Five Tathāgatas 五如來 of rites of food bestowal, the Four Great Sutras 四大部經, the Four Noble Truths 四聖諦, the Twelfefold Chain of Causation 十二因緣法, and the Myriad Practices of the Six Perfections 六度萬行法. The pardon concludes by “ordering the Masters [of the Hells] to execute everything according to this edict of the Buddha 准此佛勅，律命主者施行.”⁸⁵ Both the edict and the pardon, then, specifically conceptualize the relationship of the Buddha to the officials of Hell and the beings dwelling there as a decidedly bureaucratic one. Just as a this-worldly emperor would issue an edict to be executed by the kings, commissioners, and various other officials under his command, here, too, it is through a purely bureaucratic relationship

⁸³ Ibid., 32b.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 33a.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 33b.

structured on an exchange of documents that the denizens of Hell are able to be pardoned and saved. Zhipan and Zhuhong's *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* also includes a rite of remitting a pardon,⁸⁶ though it is only in the Qing-dynasty expansions that model documents are given.⁸⁷ Unlike the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, which focuses on the “Awakened Emperor” Śākyamuni, these other liturgies supplicate Brahma 梵天 and Indra 帝釋天, the more proximate rulers of the heavens in our world-system, as the issuers of the pardons.

Controversies: The Orthodoxy and Necessity of the Pardon

As we saw in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation, in the early twelfth century, Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (1082-1135; r. 1100-1126) decried the Buddhist practice of issuing quasi-imperial edicts on behalf of the Buddha, and the Shibi Monastery stele discussed in the Introduction to this dissertation presented itself as just such a document. This imperial image of the Buddha thus has decidedly Song roots, though it was not until the Ming that an extensive body of discourse developed around the notion. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the doctrinal orthodoxy of such bureaucratic edicts and pardons became an issue of great concern to Buddhist ritual reformers in the period—including Zhuhong, who, in revising Zhipan's Song-dynasty Water-Land manual, nevertheless maintained the practice, and Bingxue Rude, who includes a series of comments on the practice in his *Yasu tongyong Shimen shu shi*. Rude noted that in the Ming, two types of pardons were commonly employed during performances of the Water-Land Retreat—one for the living and one for the dead. To him, only that for the dead could be considered valid; the living, after all, always had recourse to repentance. Thus he tells us:

⁸⁶ The reading of the pardon is mentioned in FJSF, fasc. 3, 800a. Pardons are discussed in the long homily in FJSF, fasc. 2, 798b.

⁸⁷ See SLYGHB, fasc. 4, 37a-42a, and *Tonglun*, fasc. 1, 830c-831a, for the relevant model documents. For the relevant rites, see SLYGHB, fasc. 2, 1a-8a, and *Tonglun*, fasc. 3, 841c-843a; a commentary on the practice is included in *ibid.*, in 843a.

In Water-Land altars everywhere, *yin* and *yang* pardons are used. This is erroneous. I will try to explain why. An *yin* pardon is remitted because during the days of the life of the deceased, he produced various bad karmic effects and did not arrive at repenting [those deeds]. His body drowns in the deep springs [of the Netherworld], subjected to various forms of suffering, lacking any means of escape. Filial sons and compassionate grandsons grandly build an altar for him, where they recite sutras, worship and repent, and perform various rituals. They rely on the esoteric words of the Tathāgata for empowerment, and invite the remittance of a mandate of pardon to dispel his sins and suffering. The principle is like this. The *yang* pardon, though, is a grave falsehood. If in this life, a person has committed various sins and created karmas, and has been unable to cleanse his mind through repentance, how can he depend on a piece of paper filled with empty words and expect it to pardon his limitless sins? There is no place [for this], so we now will get rid of it. The *yin* pardon will remain since it is a common practice.

諸方水陸道場，皆用陰陽二赦。謬也。試論之。陰赦之設，蓋謂亡者在生之日，造諸惡業未及懺悔。身沒重泉，受諸苦惱，無由脫出。孝子慈孫，為之大建道場，誦經禮懺，作諸法事，仗如來密語加持，請頒赦命，釋其罪苦。理或有之。若陽赦，則舛誣之甚。豈有人現生造罪作業，不能洗心懺悔，乃憑一紙浮辭，冀欲赦其無邊之罪？無有是處，今竟刪去。姑存陰赦，聊徇俗也。⁸⁸

In a sense, then, Bingxue Rude seems to affirm the validity of the practice outlined in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*. As the cosmic emperor, the Buddha can, indeed, pardon those deceased souls who have been condemned to suffer at the hands of infernal bureaucrats; but the living are to rely on more conventional methods of repentance and expiation to rid themselves of karmic obstructions.

Zhuhong made a similar, albeit perhaps more extreme argument regarding the use of such documents. Despite allowing the remittance of pardons to remain in his revised version of Zhipan's liturgy, in his private writings, Zhuhong questioned the validity of pardons issued by the Buddha, arguing that because the Buddha is innately capable of exercising universal compassion, he had no need to take recourse to written documents. Zhuhong contends:

The remittance of pardons during rituals is something that the Sangha and Daoists both sometimes do. Daoists worship the Emperor of Heaven without knowing whom this pardons. Today, feather masters [Daoist priests] themselves lead it from the Palace of the

⁸⁸ *Yasu tongyong Shimen shu shi*, fasc. 1, "Shu shi fanli," 1a-1b, in *Meiguo Hafo daxue*, vol. 33, 242.

Heaven of the Thirty-Three *Devas* to the human world, but is this not to falsely transmit the intention of the saints? The sangha serves the Buddha, but the Buddha exists in eternal, silent illumination. After all, what land could he rule, what city, what people? What official could issue his edicts and orders? This is but to imitate those Daoists in making pardons, which is extremely laughable. Monks now have not realized their error, nor have the sponsors of retreats. Why? If you will have me counsel you, there is one thing I can suggest: memorialize to Heaven and beg for a pardon; whether or not it is given, only Heaven decides. As for the Buddha, his compassion universally covers [the cosmos], though it is [ultimately] empty; there is not a single being he does not save. So why would he [need to] use a pardon for this?

道場中放赦，僧道二門時有之。夫道崇天帝，不知此赦何人。自忉利天宮領下人世，今羽士自為之，不幾於偽傳聖旨耶？僧奉佛，而佛在常寂光中，畢竟王何國土、都何城邑、統何臣民、詔敕制誥出何官僚，而亦效彼道流，作為赦書，此大可笑。今僧莫覺其非，齋家亦莫覺其非，何也？無已，則有一焉：奏請於天，乞其頒赦，允與否，唯天主之而已。若佛則慈悲普覆，猶如虛空，無一眾生不度，而奚以赦為也？
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Zhuhong thus not only questions the logic underlying the very idea of the Buddha's issuing pardons, but also he suggests that this notion fundamentally derives from Daoist practice (which he generally seems to find incomprehensible and reprehensible). His position, while undeniably that of a reactionary reformer of orthodox Buddhist ritual, nevertheless may help us to understand the models underlying the proliferation of bureaucratic practice in the Water-Land Retreat from the Song onward. Specifically, his pointing us to Daoist use of documents, and Buddhist adoption of the practice, opens an important line of historical inquiry for us.

Daoist Origins and Orthodoxy

As Anna Seidel⁹⁰ and, more recently, Peter Nickerson⁹¹ have shown, the ritualized use of documents was not only foundational to the liturgies of the seminal Daoist Heavenly Master 天

⁸⁹ See "Daochang fangshe 道場放赦," in Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲祿宏 (1535-1615), *Yunqi fahui* 雲棲法彙, fasc. 12, in J33, no. B277, 37c. Part of this passage is also discussed in Hong Jinchun 洪錦淳, "Fojiao 'Shuilu fahui' dui Daojiao wenhua de rongshe 佛教「水陸法會」對道教文化的融攝," *Chung Hsing Journal of Humanities* 興大人文學報 34, no. 1 (June 2004): 139-140.

⁹⁰ See especially Anna K. Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion in Funeral Texts Found in Tombs," in *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka* 道教と宗教文化, edited by Akizuki Kan'ei 秋月觀暎 (Tokyo: Hirakawa Shuppansha, 1987), 21-57.

師道 movement of the second century CE, but in fact derived from the proto-Daoist use of grave-securing writs in the Warring States period (475-221 BCE). The *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (*The Petition Almanac of Master Red Pine*), an early collection of model documents for Daoist ritual, which, though likely to have been compiled during the Tang dynasty, nevertheless seems to have largely been compiled during the Six Dynasties (220-589),⁹² describes the fundamental importance of written documents to Daoist ritual, as well as the need to differentiate documents according to the rank of their recipient and sender:

According to the *Taizhen ke* (*Liturgy of Great Perfection*) and the *Chisongzi li* (*Calendar of Master Red Pine*), during the Han dynasty, humans and ghosts mixed together, and the pure and the perverted were everywhere in motion. Taishang [laojun] bestowed compassion, and descended to Mt. Jiming, where he conferred to Heavenly Master Zhang [Daoling] the covenant of Orthodox Unity and one hundred twenty levels of talismans and registers, as well as the rite of the twelve hundred officials and the three hundred great petitions—the esoteric essentials of method and text [necessary] to save people. The Heavenly Masters then dispersed among the twenty-four dioceses, promulgating the petitions and talismans of Orthodox Unity to lead and civilize the populace and to widely spread hidden virtue. But in later years long distant, the precious petitions were lost, and today, only one or two in ten is extant.

...

Further, when people of this world seek to offer petitions and memorials, be it on behalf of the state, themselves, their followers, or their ancestors, each is different and must be differentiated accordingly.... Although the old petitions each have their particular use, there are essentially three types: for monarchs, aristocrats, and commoners. Further, their ranks are not the same, and their contents are different; one may not mix them and eliminate their distinction.

謹按《太真科》及《赤松子曆》，漢代人鬼交雜，精邪遍行，太上垂慈，下降鶴鳴山，授張天師正一盟威符籙一百二十階，及千二百官儀，三百大章，法文祕要，救

⁹¹ See especially Peter Nickerson, "'Let Living and Dead Take Separate Paths': Bureaucratization and Textualisation in Early Chinese Mortuary Ritual," in *Daoism in History: Essays in Honour of Liu Ts'un-yan*, edited by Benjamin Penny (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 10-40. See also Peter Samuel Nickerson, "Taoism, Death, and Bureaucracy in Early Medieval China."

⁹² This text is introduced by Krisofer Schipper in *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, edited by Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), vol. 1, 134-135.

治人物。天師遂遷二十四治，敷行正一章符，領戶化民，廣行陰德。爾後年代綿遠，寶章缺失，今之所存，十得一二。

...

且世人求貢章奏，或為家國，或為己身，或為眷屬，或為先亡，種種不同，具如分別。...舊章雖各具所用，大抵有三：天子、王公、庶人。且尊卑不同，品目各異，不可般混而無分別。⁹³

Master Red Pine has laid things out very clearly for us. The essential documents necessary to the performance of Daoist ritual were bestowed on Zhang Daoling by the deified Laozi—that is, Taishang laojun. It was these documents that ultimately allowed the success of the Celestial Master movement, but by the early medieval period, most of those documents had been lost, as had knowledge of how, precisely, to employ them. Now, by paying close attention to the proper usage of documents, and to the parallels between secular and religious usage of them, Master Red Pine would revitalize orthopraxy.

Several centuries later, the secular origins of ritual documents—and not merely the parallels to be found between secular and religious documents—came to be acknowledged even more explicitly by Daoist ritualists of the Song and after.⁹⁴ The *Lingbao yujian* 靈寶玉鑑 (*Jade Mirror of the Numinous Treasure*), an undated text that can perhaps be seen as a Yuan work,⁹⁵ notes:

In holding retreats, one necessarily uses memorials and mandates, all of which are like those of this-worldly officialdom. Through the path of serving humans, you serve the gods and spirits of Heaven and Earth.... All places that deal with the deaths and lives

⁹³ *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (CT 615), fasc. 1, in ZHDZ, vol. 8, 620.

⁹⁴ For a concise introduction to the different genres of documents employed in the pre-modern Chinese civil bureaucracy, see E. D. Edwards, “A Classified Guide to the Thirteen Classes of Chinese Prose,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 12, no. 3/4 (1948): 770-788, esp. 774-775. A more complete account may be found in *Gujin gongwen wenzhong huishi* 古今公文文種匯釋, edited by Liang Qinghui 梁清誨 et al. (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1992).

⁹⁵ This text is introduced by John Lagerwey in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, 1018-1021.

and the transgressions and fortunes of the people of this world must be respectfully transcribed one by one in order to be heard. Be they memorials or petitions, passports or mandates, they all must be made in following the rank of the deity.... The names given to Palaces, Bureaus, Offices, and Academies in the scriptures originated in the Yuanfeng era [110-105BCE], when Emperor Wu of Han received scriptures from the Queen Mother of the West. The Mother used the names of the system of Han officialdom to translate placenames in the scripture, which she passed on to the emperor. Thus, this is the basis of the texts of memorials and mandates.

齋法之設，必有奏申關牒，悉如陽世之官府者。以事人之道，事天地神祇也。...凡有關世人死生罪福之所，必一一謄誠以聞。或奏或申，或關或牒，又當隨其尊卑等第為之。...經中之有宮府司院之者名，由漢武帝元封中，受經於西王母。母以漢制官府職名，譯經之所，云以授於帝。故爾此奏申關牒文字，之所以立也。⁹⁶

For Daoists of middle-imperial China, then, it was very clearly the bureaucratic model of the Western Han (206 BCE-9 CE) government that ultimately structured their own bureaucratic ritual practices. Importantly, this model strictly differentiated the types of documents transmitted to different spirits, each of whom must be addressed as precisely as possible.

By the Song, however, the variety of documents used in Daoist ritual was rapidly expanding,⁹⁷ and ritualists themselves were well aware of this expansion of the foundational Han model, as well as its fundamentally secular source. For example, in the introduction to his *Daomen zhiding* 道門定制 (*Established Order of Daoism*),⁹⁸ the Southern Song (1127-1279) Sichuanese Daoist ritualist Lü Yuansu 呂元素 (act. late twelfth century) noted:

As for the use of documents in retreats and offerings of the Gate of the Dao, the ancients only used talismanic seals and vermillion petitions; others, such as memorials, letters, texts, and the like, were all added by later generations according to the rituals of the human world and their investigation of classics and teachings. None is without a fixed format. Yet though one may gain its details, one loses the simple intent, causing those

⁹⁶ See “Zoushen guandie wenzi lun 奏申關牒文字論,” in *Lingbao yujian* 靈寶玉鑑 (CT 547), fasc. 1, in ZHDZ, vol. 35, 452b-452c.

⁹⁷ This is briefly discussed in Maruyama Hiroshi, entry on “*Shu* 疏 ‘Statement,’” in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, edited by Fabrizio Pregadio (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), vol. 2, 904.

⁹⁸ This text is introduced by John Lagerwey in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, 1010-1012.

whom strength cannot capture to be unable to serve; or one may lose its roughness, which causes those who serve Heaven with utmost respect to lack anything that can be examined, and causes them to be displeased with its meaning.

道門齋醮簡牘之設，古者止符篆朱章而已，其他表狀文移之屬，皆後世以人間禮，兼考合經教而增益者。所在無不定式，或得之詳備，而失簡易之旨，使力所不逮者，不可跂及；或失之鹵莽，而使盡敬事天者，無所考定，不愜其意。⁹⁹

Quite simply, the proliferation of documents used in Daoist ritual occurred in direct response to the proliferation of documents in the terrestrial government, a phenomenon well-known to scholars of the highly bureaucratized Song state. More importantly, however, the format of these documents needed to be strictly respected, lest the gods ignore one's petitions.

The purpose of these documents was, of course, clear to Daoist ritualists from the very beginning: it was only through the submission of such petitions, which was effected through complex meditative acts, as well as through physically burning the documents, that one could communicate with deities in their celestial abodes far from the human world. Nevertheless, the precise purpose and validity of certain types of documents periodically came into question, much as was true in the Buddhist context during the Ming. In his *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (*Great Rites of the Numinous Treasure of Highest Clarity*), the late Southern-Song ritual reformer Jin Yunzhong 金允中 (act. early thirteenth century) included a series of reflections regarding the proper use of different types of documents in the Retreat of the Yellow Register 黃籙齋. In particular, he suggested that it was the proper use of writs 章 during rites of pardoning and opening paths that enabled the ritual to be as broadly efficacious as possible. He notes:

Respectfully we follow the “Writ on the Ridding of Sins in Fengdu” and the “Writ on Opening Paths,” both of which are dedicated to broad salvation. Although the Official of

⁹⁹ Lü Yuansu 呂元素 (act. late twelfth century), “Daomen dingzhi xu 道門定制序,” *Daomen dingzhi* 道門定制 (CT 1224), dated 1188, in ZHDZ, vol. 42, 540a. Part of this passage is also discussed in Hong Jinchun, 139.

the Retreat exclusively seeks the post-mortem salvation of a single person, to universally reach the dark Netherworld and to save souls, we naturally have recourse to [documents].

謹按酆都拔罪章，并開通道路章，皆以廣度為主。雖齋官追薦，專為一人。然普及幽冥，係薦之魂，自然蒙有。¹⁰⁰

In other words, the function of documents is not merely to communicate with deities; rather, it is such bureaucratic exchange that ensures the grand reach of the ritual. Indeed, it seems to be only through the extensive use of documents that the ritualist can be assured of universally saving the denizens of the Hells.

This interest in the breadth of the efficacy of one's documents inevitably raises questions about the level of detail and precision necessary in summoning in general—and in ritual documents in particular. The dominant view in the period—one which seems to be embodied in the homilies and model documents for the Water-Land Retreat, which specifically and repeatedly identify all of the myriad beings to be invoked—seems to have championed an exhaustive precision based on complete respect for the bureaucratic structures governing the cosmos. A story in Hong Mai's *Record of the Listener* speaks particularly well to this dominant view of the need for bureaucratic precision. The tale gives a remarkable first-person account of a journey through Hell by a twelve-year-old boy who had been empowered as a ritual agent during the performance of a Retreat of the Yellow Register by a Daoist ritual master.¹⁰¹ The boy recounts that during his tour, he asked a Hell official for his name. The official replied:

In the past, in the human world, I was surnamed Wang; here, though, I have no surname. Whenever I see that people of [your] world are performing a Water-Land [Retreat] and

¹⁰⁰ Jin Yunzhong 金允中 (act. early thirteenth century), *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (CT 1223), fasc. 23, in ZHDZ, vol. 34, 147a. This text is introduced by John Lagerwey in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, 1024-1028. For a recent study of this text's portrayal of the Retreat of the Yellow Register, particularly in relation to the Water-Land Retreat, see Lai Chi-tim, "The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song: A Case Study of Jin Yunzhong's *Great Rites of Lingbao*," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 20 (2011): 63-94.

¹⁰¹ "Huang fashi jiao 黃法師醮," in YJZ, *bing zhi* 丙志, fasc. 10, vol. 2, 448-451.

are inviting the various offices of the Earth Bureau, calling for people like Judge Cui or Judge Li or whomever, I am never willing to go [to attend the ritual]. It would be better to simply call for the judge of office X, desk Y.

舊在人間姓王，此間無姓。每見世人設水陸，請地府諸司，稱崔判官、李判官之類，皆不肯赴。不若只稱第幾司、第幾案判官，便了。¹⁰²

In other words, for a ritual performance to be effective, one must fully respect the bureaucratic framework of offices and desks that structures the Netherworld. Further, one must be as precise as possible when summoning—and in this case, “precision” refers to strictly adhering to the use of bureaucratic titles.

Jin Yunzhong, however, proposed a rather reactionary critique of this position.

Remarking that “the multiplicity of Hells is not easy to exhaustively describe, and the tools of torture are difficult to fully hear of 兼地獄之多，未易盡述。考掠之具，難以悉聞，”¹⁰³ he presented a series of arguments against exhaustive precision, supporting instead a form of efficient abbreviation that would ensure the broadest efficacy of the ritual performance. He contends, for example, that it is ultimately unnecessary to list precisely every Hell reached by one’s writs:

In the “Writ on the Ridding of Sins,” if one were to say that the copper pillars and iron beds become jeweled paraphernalia, and that the boiling cauldrons and furnace coals become lights so cool and clear, and if one described the appearance of the Hells one by one, one would never be able to reach the end, which would instead cause one’s meaning to not be broad. In the “Writ of Opening Roads,” to report to the Greater and Less Iron Ring Mountains, the Avīci Hell, etc., is also to be [an excessive] stickler. One fears that the many names of the Hells are not easy to know fully. Thus, the “Writ on Sin” that Yunzhong has edited only speaks in abbreviated form of the intentions to reconcile rancor, and it does not repeat the forms of the Hells one by one. The “Writ on Opening Roads” speaks in a general way of the Palaces and Grottoes of Fengdu and the endless Hells, without repeating all of their names. This ensures that the words are simple but the meaning profound, the phrases abbreviated but the affairs broad.

¹⁰² Ibid., 450.

¹⁰³ Jin Yunzhong, *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, fasc. 23, in ZHDZ, vol. 34, 147a.

若拔罪章中，有言銅柱鐵床，成寶之具，鑊湯鑪炭，成清涼之燈。歷陳地獄之狀，則言之，終不能盡，反使其意不廣。如開通道路章，告下大小鐵圍、無間地獄等名，亦為拘泥。恐地獄之眾名稱，尤未易盡知。故允中所行校罪章，則略言執對消平，冤仇和解之意而已，不復歷數獄具之形。開通道路章，則總言酆都宮洞，無窮地獄，不復悉陳地獄之名。庶使言簡而意深，辭省而事廣。¹⁰⁴

Jin is thus ultimately interested in efficiency, an interest that aligns closely with his more general interest in stripping contemporary Lingbao ritual of recent innovations and returning it to its foundational forms.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, Jin repeatedly speaks of “old formats,” consciously drawing a division between the correct documents of old, and the unwanted additions of the moderns.¹⁰⁶ Efficiency and orthodoxy, both exemplified in past models, were thus key to Jin’s understanding of the role of documents in ritual.

Significantly for our discussion of the Water-Land Retreat, Jin ultimately concludes his discussion of documents for the Retreat of the Yellow Register with a more general question about the validity of liturgical pardoning, a question whose tone bears a surprising resemblance to that of Zhuhong, who, as we saw earlier, was writing in a context three centuries later, and a

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 147b.

¹⁰⁵ See the brief discussion in *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, 1025-1028.

¹⁰⁶ For example, he writes that

The “writ” is an old format. The method books of this world differ in each age. Only if one has a model writ is it not allowed to change it according to one’s own ideas. For example, in the Retreat of the Yellow Register, one has always used five writs, which are vermilion memorials; these are the “Writ of the White Hearse and Horse,” the “Writ on Busting Fengdu and the Ridding of Sins,” the “Writ of Opening Roads,” the “Writ of Bathing and Refining,” and the “Writ of Ferrying the Deceased Souls Upward.” Recently, there have been those who have changed and moved their format. My master transmitted the old format. It should not change with time. Thus, I follow the old format.

章乃古式也。世之法書，隨時不同。惟有章格，不容以私意更易也。如黃籙齋，則自來用五通章，并朱表也。曰素車白馬章，破酆都拔罪章，開通道路章，沐浴鍊度章，升度亡魂章。近有更易移動其格者矣。師傳舊式，非可移時，故從古式也。

Jin Yunzhong, *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, fasc. 23, in ZHDZ, vol. 34, 147a.

religious tradition apart, about the way in which the Buddha's innate universal compassion obviated the need to take recourse to written documents. Jin concludes:

As for the words of descriptions, their order can never be exhausted. And as for the realms of the gloomy Netherworld, their names cannot be exhausted. Thus, in universalizing one's words by summarizing the affairs [of the ritual], all places in the Earth Prisons will be covered with benevolence; the punishments of the tools of miserable prisons will all receive mysterious pardon. So there is no need to indicate a particular name in order to later be able to extinguish sin and suffering, to confirm a particular location in order to later be able to broaden the efficacy of the retreat. If one is covered by the compassion bestowed by the Emperor on High, there is nothing that is not ferried over. Students should widely exercise their minds, and should not be stubborn to the point of being simple. This is the most important thing in studying the Way: narrow-mindedness is not the mind that opens to heavenly people.

蓋陳詞之語，次不能盡。而幽陰之境，名不可殫。故普其辭而總其事，則凡有地獄之所，咸被宸恩，應罹獄具之刑，悉蒙玄宥。又何必指其名而後能消罪苦，定其地而後可廣齋功耶。儻蒙上帝垂慈，則無所不度。學者正當廣用其心，固不宜執泥於淺近也。此最為學道之第一事，淺中狹量，非開度天人之胸襟也。¹⁰⁷

Simplicity, then, is the key to ritual efficacy. By evoking general categories rather than enumerating individual constituents, one ensures that the universally salvific potential of one's actions are fully realized.

These rather reactionary sentiments thus directly contravene the more general impression that we have gotten of the need for bureaucratic precision in conducting rituals such as the Water-Land Retreat and the Retreat of the Yellow Register during the Song. Within the context of the recurring debates on orthodoxy and efficiency that preoccupied ritual practitioners throughout the history of both religions, such views, however, could be easily accommodated. Indeed, these strident critiques of excessive pedantry in the listing of names necessarily bring to mind Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037-1101) championing of the humble, orthodox methods of Water-Land performance in Song-dynasty Sichuan, which we saw in Chapter 1.3, as well as Zhuhong's

¹⁰⁷ Jin Yunzhong, *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, fasc. 23, in ZHDZ, vol. 34, 147b-147c.

comments on the superiority of Zhipan's liturgy thanks to its supreme simplicity, as seen in Chapter 1.1. As highly malleable ritual syntaxes whose precise details were always open to contention and manipulation, both the Water-Land Retreat and the Retreat of the Yellow Register conveniently permitted both minimalist and maximalist methods of performance and of document composition.

The above survey of the role of documents in Buddhist and Daoist ritual has pointed to the adoption of a fundamentally Daoist mode of ritual practice, itself modeled on secular governmental methods, by Buddhist ritualists in the Yuan and Ming. I have suggested that this transformation of ritual practice was predicated on a vision of the Buddha as a decidedly this-worldly emperor, who not only came to be seen as a figure who has transcended our Sahā world by attaining complete awakening but who also governs the spirits of the earth, water, and underworld in a distinctly bureaucratic fashion. The parallels among the types of documents used by Buddhist ritualists to communicate with and on behalf of this Awakened Emperor and the types of documents employed both by Daoist ritualists and this-worldly officials are striking. Further, we have gained the sense that the Buddhist ritualist himself came to play the role of yet another mere functionary in a bureaucratic cosmos that unites humans, Earth Gods, Hell Kings, and more. Yet almost none of the textual evidence of a Buddhist orientation that we have examined is definitively dated to the Song. While statements had been employed since the late Six Dynasties, neither mandates nor memorials, and neither messengers nor the road-controlling Emperors of the Five Directions, were anywhere to be found before the Yuan and Ming texts under discussion; only Emperor Huizong's critique of "Buddhist edicts" and the Shibi si stele's self-aggrandizement as an "Edict of the Buddha 佛勅" have suggested that the bureaucratization of the Buddhist cosmos may have begun in the Song. However, a close reading of visual

evidence from the Song will give us a rather different impression of the advanced state of that process by the eleventh and twelfth centuries. More importantly, reading a wide array of images, all produced within the broad context of the Water-Land Retreat, while keeping in mind a sense of the dialectical conception of the Buddha as both bureaucrat and transcendent will help to give us a highly nuanced view of the place of the bureaucratic imagination, and the bureaucratic cosmos, in the Song-dynasty practice of the Water-Land Retreat.

A Return to the Visual

In the introduction to this chapter, I suggested that the triumvirate of desk, document, and burner found in the seventeenth painting of the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* should be seen as an important node of pictorial motifs directing our attention to the bureaucratic aspects of the Water-Land Retreat itself. While we have already gotten a sense of the ways in which Water-Land practices were bureaucratized through the use of documents and through a conceptualization of the Buddha as an edict-issuing Awakened Emperor, I now want to return to this trio of pictorial motifs to ask in what ways this painting might engage in dialogue with other sets of works from the period. The extant Song-dynasty Water-Land paintings surveyed in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation generally lack these motifs that bespeak the bureaucratic obsessions that seems to lie at the heart of the ritual's text and performance. After all, works produced specifically for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat are of a generally iconic character; they, simply depict cloud-borne deities descending on clouds into a ritual space, removed from any diegetic narrative context.¹⁰⁸ The dramatic imagery of ontological

¹⁰⁸ One might claim, of course, that these are “narrative” works in that they imply the temporal and spatial movement of the deities from their realm into ours; that is, their narrative is one fully circumscribed by the liturgical context in which they are used. However, no sense of a narrative internal to the images themselves is given. They lack, for example, the scenography of ritual performance surrounding the descent of the deities that is to be found in works like the first of the Daitoku-ji paintings (Figure 1.6). Thus, I consider them to fall into a more “iconic” rather than “narrative” mode of imagery.

transformation that makes the seventeenth Daitoku-ji painting and the thirteenth-century Qinglong si 青龍寺 mural (Figure 2.1) so compelling—that is, imagery that hinges on the motif of the burner and the meditating ritualist—can find no place in these non-narrative works; nevertheless, as I will discuss below, there are other ways in which the bureaucratic imagination is incorporated into these seemingly simple paintings, and there exists a great array of other works wherein the bureaucratic imagination is brought to the fore.

Infernal Kings and Their Modular Courts

Looking outside the realm of Water-Land paintings *per se* to other, related genres of Song-dynasty Buddhist art, the desk and document, though not necessarily the burner, are easily able to found. Most prominently, and perhaps obviously, these objects figure at the heart of imagery of the Ten Kings of Purgatory, images that perhaps represent the clearest visual expression of the newly bureaucratic, modular conception of the Buddhist cosmos in mid- to late-imperial China.¹⁰⁹ As has been thoroughly described by Lothar Ledderose, Stephen Teiser,¹¹⁰ Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬,¹¹¹ Takasu Jun 鷹巢純,¹¹² Zhang Zong 張总,¹¹³ and others, extant

¹⁰⁹ See Ledderose, 163-186. See also Caroline Hirasawa's adaption of this conception of modularity to the medieval Japanese context in Caroline Hirasawa, "The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution: A Primer on Japanese Hell Imagery and Imagination," *Monumenta Nipponica* 63, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 1-50.

¹¹⁰ See Stephen F. Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Making of Purgatory in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994); and idem, "'Having Once Died and Returned to Life': Representations of Hell in Medieval China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 48, no. 2 (December 1988): 433-464.

¹¹¹ Suzuki Kei 鈴木敬, et al., *Sō Gen butsuga: Nakanzoku Rakan-zu Jūō-zu no kenkyū* 宋元仏画：就中羅漢図・十王図の研究 (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1970-1973).

¹¹² See especially Takasu Jun 鷹巢純, "Kōdate Naomi-shi zō 'Jūō jigoku zu' (kadai) to suiriku-ga 高達奈緒美氏蔵「十王地獄図」(仮題)と水陸画," *Etoki kenkyū* 絵解き研究 13 (1997): 1-26.

¹¹³ See, for example, Zhang Zong 張总, *Dizang xinyang yanjiu* 地藏信仰研究 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003); and especially, idem, "Shiwang tu 十王圖," in *Hanmo huicui: Xidu Meiguo cang Zhongguo Wudai Song Yuan shuhua zhenpin* 翰墨薈萃：細讀美國藏中國五代宋元書畫珍品 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2012), 328-339.

sets of such paintings from the Southern Song and after typically consist of a left- and right-hand group of five paintings each; each painting depicts a single king, whose body is angled slightly so that all of the kings in that particular group appear to be facing those of the opposite group. In several extant sets, the central position between the two groups of kings is occupied by a frontal, iconic depiction of the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha 地藏菩薩, regarded as the preeminent savior of Hell-bound souls since the mid to late Tang dynasty (618-907) (Figures 3.3 and 3.4).¹¹⁴ More importantly to the present study, Lothar Ledderose has shown that Southern Song sets of such works, the extant versions of which were largely produced in the region near Ningbo and were imported to Japan during the medieval period, are highly formulaic, and modular, in multiple senses of the term.

All extant Southern Song depictions of each of the Ten Kings typically consist of three main registers (Figure 2.78). In the foreground, an array of brilliantly polychromed demons tortures the souls of the deceased, who are dressed with white rags over top of their nearly monochrome, vegetal-brown skin. The demons come in a variety of guises; the wide range of armors and robes that they wear almost seem to serve primarily as a means by which the artist might flaunt his skills in patterning and polychromy. Too, the demons make use of a bewildering array of techniques of torture, though it does not seem as though particular punishments are unfailingly associated with the court of a particular king. Cangues, saws, tongue-pliers, grist mills, mountains of knives, flames, and cages feature most prominently. In images of the fifth king, King Yama, a “karma mirror 業鏡” also typically appears, showing the

¹¹⁴ On the cult of Kṣitigarbha, see especially Zhang Zong, *Dizang xinyang yanjiu*; Zhiru Ng, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); and, for an insightful perspective on the deity's cult in Japan, Hank Glassman, *The Face of Jizō: Image and Cult in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012). For an extended iconographic analysis of this particular work, see Michel Soymié, “Notes d'iconographie chinoise: les acolytes de Ti-tsang (I),” *Arts asiatiques* 14 (1966): 45-78, and idem, “Notes d'iconographie chinoise: les acolytes de Ti-tsang (II),” *Arts asiatiques* 16 (1967): 141-170.

past misdeeds of the deceased like a supramundane surveillance tape on permanent repeat.¹¹⁵ In one commonly seen variant of this scene, which can be found in its mature form as early as the late ninth century in Niche 60 at Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞 (Cave of Perfect Enlightenment) in Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province, the mirror shows the deceased in the midst of slaughtering an animal (Figures 3.5 and 3.6)¹¹⁶; in a Southern Song set of Ten Kings paintings signed by the Ningbo artist Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, now in the collection Eigen-ji 永源寺 in Shiga Prefecture, Japan, a chicken and duck carry complaints against the deceased in their beaks, while a demon forces him to watch his act of slaughtering these animals in the karma mirror (Figure 3.7). In other images, the deceased are shown clothed in elaborate robes, bearing copies of sutras or gilded icons of Buddhist deities, thus suggesting that these are the souls of people who properly venerated the Buddha and his teachings during their lifetime and who consequently will escape the punishments meted out by the netherworldly judges and their lackeys (Figure 3.8).

The middleground of the images, which usually appears to occupy the same spatial plane as the acts of torture in the foreground, invariably shows a king—dressed in heavy robes of black, red, white, pink, or blue silk, embroidered with patterns of landscapes, constellations, and the sun and moon—seated at a desk, which is often covered with multiple layers of silk shrouds.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Eugene Y. Wang beautifully likens these mirrors to our “modern wide screens” in his “Oneiric Horizons and Dissolving Bodies: Buddhist Cave Shrine as Mirror Hall,” *Art History* 27, no. 4 (2004): 499.

¹¹⁶ Angela Howard identifies this as a reference to the killing of an ox by the mother of Maudgalyāyana 目連, the disciple of the buddha Śākyamuni who famously journeyed to the realm of the hungry ghosts to find that his mother was being punished for past karmic misdeeds. See Angela F. Howard, *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China* (Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2001), 157-158. On Maudgalyāyana, see Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). For a brief introduction to this niche, see Henrik H. Sørensen, *The Buddhist Sculptures at Yuanjuedong in Anyue: The History and Art of a Buddhist Sanctuary in Central Sichuan Province* (Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1999), 54-56.

¹¹⁷ A painting of King Yama by the studio of Jin chushi 金處士家 in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum in New York—which can be dated to sometime prior to 1195 based on the artist’s referring to Ningbo as “Mingzhou 明州,” a name used only until 1195, in his signature—shows the King seated at an uncovered desk, whose form very

Upon the desk have been placed documents, an inkstone, a brush, and what appears to be a scroll weight (to hold open an unrolled handscroll). Red- and green-robed officials, either human or demonic in form but wearing the simpler robes and black silk hats of secular officials, typically approach the king with further documents, pointing out specific passages in the texts, presumably concerning the good and bad deeds of the souls tortured in the foreground.¹¹⁸ Other assistants, usually younger in appearance, are sometimes seen carrying massive, silk-shrouded seals for the king's use, bearing cloth-covered boxes of texts, or carrying incense burners.

The king and his entourage are separated from the background of the image by a large, single-panel standing screen, which is usually adorned with monochrome landscape imagery. In some Southern Song paintings, and particularly in later images sets, the screen itself is surrounded by billowing masses of clouds, here perhaps serving simply to suggest the presence of the august figure of the king (Figure 3.9). Finally, behind the screen, a balustrade separates the king's court from empty space beyond. In the corner of the pictorial field opposite that occupied by the screen, a small cartouche, supported by a lotus blossom and crowned by an upturned lotus leaf, typically proclaims the name and rank of the king within the group of ten.¹¹⁹

closely resembles that of the table-*cum*-desk in the seventeenth work of the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats* (Figure 3.10).

¹¹⁸ Green-robed kings and officials and green-colored demons appear particularly commonly in Song-dynasty tales of the Netherworld. The mention of such figures seems almost to have served as an immediate indication that the tale would be one of infernal judgment. See, for example, “Huang fashi jiao,” in YJZ, *bing zhi* 丙志, fasc. 10, vol. 2, 448-451.

¹¹⁹ Alternative traditions of representing the Ten Kings exist, as other scholars have previously explored. This is particularly true for illustrated handscrolls of the *Fo shuo yuxiu shiwang shengqi jing* 佛說預修十王生七經 (*The Sutra on the Ten Kings*), late-Tang, Five Dynasties, and early-Song copies of which have been recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17 in Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, and from pagoda relic crypts in Jiangnan 江南—for example, at Lingshi si 靈石寺 in Taizhou 台州, Zhejiang Province. In such handscrolls, the kings are not necessarily shown seated at desks. See entry # 78 in *Sacred Ningbo: Gateway to 1300 Years of Japanese Buddhism* 聖地寧波：日本仏教 1300 年の源流、すべてはここからやって来た (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2009), 84 and 300.

The total bureaucratization of this particular quadrant of the Buddhist cosmos is thus eminently clear. These are deities who, at least in theory, administer punishments to the deceased directly in response to the deeds that he or she performed during life. The punishments are directly dependent upon a code of laws, and these judges impartially enforce that code after reviewing the records of the life of the deceased and after considering complaints brought against the deceased by any beings they had harmed. All aspects of this process of judgment are directly depicted in these works, as are the subsequent punishments administered to the defendants. In essence, the works thus serve as pictorial assertions of the truthfulness of all described by the monks officiating at funerary rituals, and as arguments in favor of the need to perform such funerary rites in order to avoid post-mortem suffering.

More importantly, this conception of the Netherworld, and the depictions of it, can be understood as modular in multiple ways. As Lothar Ledderose has clearly described, each painting in a set of ten reproduces the structure of the others with little variation; it is only at the level of precise details—the costumes of the torturers, the types of punishments being administered, etc.—that variations are to be found.¹²⁰ The general compositional structure always remains the same, even across multiple sets produced by the same studio for patrons of different means, thus suggesting that patterns were commonly employed by studio artisans; it was not in terms of compositional complexity but instead only in terms of the embellishments or details added to images, and in terms of the quality of pigments and silks used, that productions for elite or prosaic clients were distinguished. This general sense of the modularity of the courts of the Netherworld holds true, too, for textual descriptions of the courts of the Kings; one has the impression that they are all but homologous, and this insistent repetition of the shared character

¹²⁰ Ledderose, 163-186.

of the environment of punishment seems only to amplify the experience of trauma that netherworldly judgment seems designed to produce.

Intriguingly, within the images, there seems to be a confusion of the realms of Purgatory and of Hell. The punishments associated with specific Hells in earlier Buddhist and Daoist texts—for example, mountains of blades, or inescapable flames—are here transposed into the courts of the Kings of Purgatory, and specifically into the foregrounds of their depictions. This confusion seems to imply a homology between Purgatory and Hell, allowing us to consider that the Hells themselves may be as modular, and repetitive, as the courts of Purgatory. Indeed, as one reads through the lists of infernal officials summoned and Hells mentioned during rituals such as the Water-Land Retreat, one finds a dizzying array of these infernal places; there are major Hells and minor Hells of seemingly infinite varieties, each distinguishable from the next only in terms of the precise type of punishment administered.

Loopholes and the Dialectics of Buddhist Bureaucracy

Of course, a loophole is built into this otherwise impartial system: as the *Sutra on the Ten Kings* tells us, by making offerings to the Ten Kings during one's lifetime, or by enlisting one's descendants to do the same after one's death, one can escape some of the punishments that might otherwise be exerted. Zhipan's *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (*Complete Chronicle of the Buddhas and Patriarchs*), following various earlier texts, suggests that if one performs pre-mortem offerings and burns spirit money 紙錢 to “send to one's storehouse 寄窟” of karmic merit, the merit generated will be seven times that of post-mortem offerings, for only one-seventh of the merit generated by post-mortem offerings can be received by the deceased; Zhipan even cites a tale from Hong Mai's 洪邁 (1123-1202) *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (*Record of the Listener*) as proof of the

commonness and efficacy of such practices during the Southern Song.¹²¹ This loophole, then, is a highly systematized one. Although it might first appear as though such offerings are to be understood merely as bribes to encourage the Kings to ignore the past misdeeds of the deceased, in actuality, these offerings are highly regulated and are to be offered on a strict schedule in expectation of predictable, reliable results.

A rather more unpredictable, albeit ultimately more efficacious, loophole may also exist in this system, however—a loophole that may suggest that the limits of this bureaucratic conception of the Buddhist cosmos are far more circumscribed than they have thus far appeared.¹²² As I briefly mentioned above, many Southern Song sets of Ten Kings paintings include an eleventh painting—a frontal icon of Kṣitigarbha, who occupies the central position between the divided groups of kings. This compositional conceit goes back at least to the late ninth century. Some of the earliest extant Ten Kings imagery—specifically, cliff carvings, such as Niche 60 at Yuanjue dong in Anyue County (Figure 3.5), as well as the late-tenth-century Niche 253 at Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain) in Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, which was discussed extensively in Chapters 1.3 and 2.3 of this dissertation (Figure 1.27)—are structured in precisely this way. Yuanjue dong Niche 60 centers upon a large image of a seated, pendant-legged Kṣitigarbha, who is dressed as a hooded monk and holds a mendicant’s staff. He is placed at the center of the rear wall of the niche, while to his left and right are two levels of purgatorial king imagery. Four kings, each physically smaller in size than Kṣitigarbha, are

¹²¹ FZTJ, fasc. 33, 320c.

¹²² In thinking about the breakdowns in the bureaucratic structures of Chinese religions, I have found particularly useful the essays in *Unruly Gods: Divinity in Society in China*, edited by Meir Shahar and Robert P. Weller (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1996), especially Meir Shahar and Robert P. Weller, “Introduction: Gods and Society in China,” in *ibid.*, 1-36. I have also been inspired by the highly structuralist account in P. Steven Sangren, *History and Magical Power in a Chinese Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), esp. 127-185.

seated at desks arrayed along the upper register on each side of the bodhisattva—two kings on each side of the rear wall of the niche, and two more on each of the flanking side walls. (The side wall at proper left has been destroyed but can be assumed to be symmetrical to the wall at proper right.) The kings are each accompanied by two lower-ranking officials.

In the lower register, a single king is seated at a desk on either side of Kṣitigarbha; proportionally smaller infernal officials are arrayed in the remaining space of the lower registers, flanking the two kings. In front of these officials, demonic lackeys lead deceased souls and animals to assemble beneath Kṣitigarbha and his bureaucratic compatriots. At proper left, souls about to be judged hold forth icons and sutras as though to make a case for leniency to the king above, who is dressed in the garb of a military, rather than civil, official—a convention often found in late-Tang to early-Song depictions of the King who Turns the Wheel of the Five Paths 五道轉輪王, which seems to have fallen out of favor by the Southern Song. Beneath the throne of Kṣitigarbha, a karma mirror, clearly showing a person in the act of slaughtering an animal, is featured; at proper left, one of the young attendants of good and evil holds a scroll, presumably inscribed with a list of the good and evil deeds of the deceased, while on the opposite side, a lackey tortures the soul. Further, below the desk of the lower king and officials at proper right, animals rush toward the karma mirror, seemingly bearing in their beaks and mouths complaints against the deceased.

But the key figure in this composition really is Kṣitigarbha, the central node around which this modular, bureaucratized image of Purgatory has been constructed. He is by far the largest figure in the composition, and it is only he who directly addresses the viewer—just as was true in Beishan Niche 253, where the paired icons of Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha served as the iconic focal point toward which the cloud-borne Ten Kings descended, and toward which

the viewer-worshipper clearly is meant to present offerings and make supplications. Here, too, it seems to be toward Kṣitigarbha that we ultimately are meant to turn our attention; indeed, a worshipping figure, proportionally larger than the judged souls depicted beneath the desks of the kings below, is shown directly supplicating the deity, almost modeling for us the worshipful posture that we, too, should adopt. Kṣitigarbha thus seems to represent something like the anti-bureaucratic, almost irrational exception to the systematized, modular conception of the Netherworld embodied in the Ten Kings. By directly supplicating him, the viewer-worshipper is assured escape from the crushing bureaucracy of Purgatory and Hell. The bodhisattva intervenes in those processes, whisking the deceased away to a higher path of rebirth.

Kṣitigarbha may, then, be seen as something like a suture between the bureaucratic conception of the underworld—which, as Stephen Teiser has shown, was the product of the intermingling of Buddhist and indigenous Chinese conceptions of post-mortem fate¹²³—and a more purely “Mahayanist” conception of the cosmos, in which the supremely compassionate, salvific powers of bodhisattvas such as Kṣitigarbha and Avalokiteśvara will universally assure escape from the otherwise highly regulated functioning of karma.¹²⁴ Importantly, we might also read the bodhisattva’s monk-like attire as an allusion specifically to the sangha’s capacity to intervene in those bureaucratic Hells. Only through the powerful medium of the monastic body can worshippers gain access to the means by which to escape the terrors of bureaucracy.

By placing a frontal icon of Kṣitigarbha at the center of sets of Ten Kings hanging scrolls, Southern Song artists also seem to have insisted upon the power of this deity to transcend the

¹²³ Teiser, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*, esp. 1-15.

¹²⁴ Illustrated handscrolls of the *Sutra on the Ten Kings* often place an image of Kṣitigarbha at either the beginning or the end of the manuscript, thus insisting, albeit by means of a different compositional strategy, on the essential role of this deity in saving the reader-worshipper from the ravages of infernal bureaucracy that he is either about to see or has already been introduced to.

bureaucracy of the netherworldly kings. However, certain pictorial elements in the composition of these images of Kṣitigarbha suggest that he himself may have actually been more complexly or dialectically integrated into that purgatorial bureaucracy—just as this-worldly monks, too, were intimately involved in the bureaucratic practices that they ultimately were seeking to transcend. In the paintings of Kṣitigarbha by Lu Xinzong that are now held in the collections of Eigen-ji in Shiga Prefecture and Rozan-ji 廬山寺 in Kyoto (Figures 3.3 and 3.4), the deity, who is shown bare-headed and dressed in ornate monastic robes, is depicted seated atop a jeweled dais of a form not dissimilar to that seen in the depictions of some Kings of Purgatory—for example, in the Lu Xinzong painting of the First King that is now in the collection of the Nara National Museum (Figure 3.11). A halo surrounds the deity’s head, and from it emerge six rays of light, each differently colored, on which are each depicted a single representative of a particular path of rebirth; in both of these paintings, humans and *devas*, Hell-dwellers and *asuras*, and animals and hungry ghosts are each paired together. Lotus blossoms support the deity’s feet, and rather strikingly, clouds well up around the base of the deity’s throne, suggesting, perhaps, his sudden manifestation before the viewer-worshipper surrounded by the adjacent ten terrifying images of infernal judgment. A lion kneels in front of the throne, a reference to the story of the Tang-dynasty monk Daoming’s 道明 journey through Hell.¹²⁵

Most importantly for the present argument, Kṣitigarbha is surrounded by six subsidiary, though conceptually significant, figures—three to each side of him. Standing slightly behind his dais are the youthful attendants who bear the registers of good and evil deeds. It is these registers that the kings consult when determining the punishment proper for a particular soul—

¹²⁵ On this motif, see Michel Soymié, “Jizō no shishi ni tsuite 地藏の獅子について,” *Tōhō shūkyō* 東方宗教 19 (1962): 37-52.

and, it seems, that Kṣitigarbha himself consults, as well. Directly in front of Kṣitigarbha's throne are two officials, dressed in rather austere robes and each holding the tablet of a courtier. Closest to the viewer are, at proper left, a monk, who carries Kṣitigarbha's staff, and at proper right, a figure dressed in light armor who places his hands in a gesture of reverence while resting a gilded lion-headed axe across his arms. These figures are all proportionally smaller than Kṣitigarbha, and they are arrayed in strict symmetry around him. The inclusion of the two officials, the two attendants of good and evil, the deity's king-like dais, and the rigorous symmetry of the composition seem to transform this into an almost court-like scene, reminding us of the iconography and composition of the images of the Ten Kings themselves. At a moment's notice, Kṣitigarbha may judge the deceased, and by issuing commands to the officials in attendance, he may mete out punishment or salvation. Kṣitigarbha has, seemingly, become bureaucratized. And yet, unlike the kings, Kṣitigarbha is not shown consulting documents. He sits with his hands in a mudra of meditation, his eyes more closed than open, directly facing the viewer yet not directly engaging him. The punishments, instruments of torture, and demonic lackeys that occupy so prominent a place in the depictions of the Ten Kings are conspicuously absent. If this is a court-like scene, it is one that seems to speak above all of compassion, and of a transcendence of the bureaucratic mechanism into which the deity has been pictorially yoked. Thus, by the Southern Song, a sense of dialectics had entered the imagery of the Ten Kings. Kṣitigarbha at once was integrated into this highly rationalized system while simultaneously representing an irrational, unpredictable way out. This dialectic conception of bureaucracy and its transcendence lies, I contend, at the heart of Song-dynasty Buddhist ritual—in particular, the Water-Land Retreat—and its visual culture. I intend to reflect in greater detail on this

conception in the final pages of this chapter; however, to connect these observations to the visual culture of the Water-Land Retreat, an important iconographic detour is first necessary.

Messengers of Water and Land

Most important as a signifier of the bureaucratic idiom that seems to have partially subjugated Kṣitigarbha himself and that underlies Buddhist ritual performance more generally in the period is the armored figure at proper-right in the foreground of these icons of Kṣitigarbha. He deserves particular attention, as he will take us directly to the Water-Land Retreat. He wears green boots with reinforced heels, and a blue, diaphanous robe over white leggings. Metal chest armor, as well as a pendant panel of armor hanging below his waist, covers his blue robe, as well as his white undergarments; a light white vest partially covers his armor. All of this is cinched together by a red ribbon and gold belt. A red-lined white jacket is worn over top. The head of the figure is covered with a light black silk cap, as well as a scarf of red brocade. As mentioned above, the figure holds his hands in a gesture of reverence and rests his lion-headed axe between the crooks of his elbows. His appearance, then, is that of a lightly-armored soldier, a figure able both to defend against attack and to respond instantly to commands and summonses. Who, exactly, is this figure?

Figures dressed in a similar manner, carrying either axes, spears, boxed documents, or tablets, appear in many extant sets of Ming- and Qing-dynasty Water-Land paintings, where, as Caroline Gyss-Vermande has shown, they are invariably identified by inscription as Tally-Bearing Messengers.¹²⁶ A passage in the statement addressed to the Four Messengers in the “Miscellaneous Texts” of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* gives us a poetic sense of their appearance. They are said to be “brilliant and upright, speedy and bearing tallies. They hold

¹²⁶ See Caroline Gyss-Vermande, “Les Messagers divins et leur iconographie,” *Arts asiatiques* 46 (1991): 96-110.

treasured blades, their robes embroidered with dazzling clouds; with a halberd or axe resting across [their arms], their countenance is as clear as the color of jade 聰明正直，捷疾持符。握寶刀而衣綉霓裳，橫鉞斧而兒彰玉彩。”¹²⁷ The iconographic template is thus textually set (though as we have already seen in the images of Kṣitigarbha, images including such figures preceded this particular text by several centuries), and rather remarkably, artisans throughout the Ming and Qing seem to have adhered very closely to the description laid out here. In the sixteenth-century set of Water-Land paintings from Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility) in Shanxi Province, the Four Messengers in Charge of the Year, Month, Day, and Hour, who are shown in the forty-second scroll at left, all carry halberds (though the weapons are not placed across the messengers’ arms), and two are cloaked in light red outer garments decorated with flame-like cloud patterns rendered in gold pigment (Figure 3.12). The rest of their multiple layers of robes and trousers differs little from the Southern Song examples discussed above, and like their predecessors, these figures, too, wear light black silk caps secured with a white headscarf. The messenger in the center of the image stands perfectly at attention, his chest thrust forward as though to suggest that at any moment he may take to the skies to carry documents to the ends of the cosmos. In other paintings in the set—for example, the thirty-fifth work at right, which depicts the various deities that protect monasteries, pagodas, cities, etc. 護國護民城隍社廟土地殿塔伽藍等眾—, similar halberd-bearing messengers accompany a wizened, high-ranking official and a younger member of the supramundane bureaucracy who carries a bundle of documents secured within a cloth outer wrapper (Figure 3.13).

¹²⁷ TDMY, “Zawen,” fasc. 2, 4a.

In the two sets of Water-Land paintings in the Musée Guimet—one sponsored by the imperial court in 1454, the other completed around 1600—which serve as the primary object of analysis in Gyss-Vermande’s essay, messenger figures appear in even more dynamic forms. In the 1454 set, three messenger paintings survive, each depicting the figures within a synoptically narrative composition that directly suggests their ritual function (Figures 3.14, 3.15, and 3.16).¹²⁸ In each, the messenger, who stands beside his horse, is shown interacting with supramundane bureaucrats, who are represented in the act of writing or presenting an already-boxed document to the messenger. The messenger then appears again at smaller scale in the upper or lower register of the composition, mounted on horseback, holding the document box 方函 in front of him as he rushes to the ends of the cosmos. In two of these paintings—one depicting the Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Middle Realm 中界持符使者, and the other depicting the Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Buddha’s Assembly 佛會持符使者¹²⁹—, the messenger is borne aloft by clouds, likely rendered in vegetal pigments, which have been painted over the monochrome ink-wash clouds that otherwise fill the pictorial field; in the third painting, which depicts the Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Lower Realm 下界持符使者, the boxed document has been strapped to the messenger’s back, and his horse, which is not borne by clouds, rushes downward toward waves visible behind the ink-wash clouds that fill the rest of the silk panel. Meanwhile,

¹²⁸ On synoptically narrative imagery, which combines depictions of the same figure at multiple different temporal moments within a single spatial composition, see Julia K. Murray, “What is ‘Chinese Narrative Illustration’?,” *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 4 (December 1998): 602-615, esp. 608-609. See also Vidya Dehejia, “On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 3 (September 1990): 374-392.

¹²⁹ This title seems to be a variation of that of the “Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Upper Realm 上界持符使者” that appears more commonly in both Buddhist and Daoist rituals. A mandate entitled “Shangjie fohui die 上界佛會牒” (“Mandate to [the Messenger] of the Buddha’s Assembly of the Upper Realm”) is included in TDMY, “Tantu shi 壇圖式,” 37a, as part of a set of supplementary model documents that seem to have been taken from an independent set of model texts entitled *Huayan haiyin daochang xuji biao shu die tie* 華嚴海印道場續集表疏牒帖 (*Continued Collection of Memorials, Statements, Mandates, and Notices of the Altar of the Seal of the Avatamsaka Sea*) composed for the Water-Land Retreat and appended to the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*.

in some works in the slightly later set of Water-Land works, messengers, now depicted as civil rather than military officials, are shown approaching the descending deities to deliver documents directly to them (Figure 2.21). Such works thus give the viewer-worshipper a sense of the ways in which this bureaucratic cosmos, and this ritual that relies so heavily on bureaucratic communication, functions. The paintings narrativize the ritual proceedings, presenting to viewer-worshippers a visual confirmation of the proceedings orally described by the Cantor and physically performed by the ritualists.

Summoning Arhats

Intriguingly, these distinctive messenger figures—different in appearance from both the more militaristic guardians and Heavenly Kings 天王 that appear everywhere in Chinese Buddhist art throughout much of its history and from the secular officials that appear as both donor figures and narrative characters within transformation tableaux—seem to have first appeared in Buddhist artworks during the Song¹³⁰; and in this period, they already appear in a wide variety of contexts. As seen above, we find them especially in works related to the Ten Kings of Purgatory. However, they also appear commonly in depictions of arhats, a subject that seems to have provided fertile ground for Song artists to show off their talents in depicting a

¹³⁰ Based solely on a survey of extant artworks, it would appear that messengers emerge in the Southern Song. Textual evidence, however, suggests that messengers appeared in Northern Song works, as well. In fact, Qin Guan's 秦觀 (1049-1100) "Wubai luohan tu ji 五百羅漢圖記" ("Record of an Image of the Five Arhats"), which describes a single-panel composition depicting the *Five Hundred Arhats* brushed by the monk-painter Faneng 法能, mentions "as for demons, there are those who [are shown]...delivering retreat texts 鬼有...送齋書." See Qin Guan 秦觀 (1049-1100) "Wubai luohan tu ji 五百羅漢圖記," 1080, in QSW, fasc. 2585, vol. 120, 125; a full translation of the text is included in Wen Fong, "Five Hundred Lohans at the Daitokuji," unpublished PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1956, 153-156. Indeed, document-bearing demons are mentioned in many encomia on sets of images of the sixteen and eighteen arhats from the Northern Song; a selection of sets of such encomia, including works by Su Shi, Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045-1105), and Huihong 惠洪 (1071-1128) are translated in *ibid.*, 99-113. Huihong, for example, mentions that "two demons deliver documents 兩鬼投書" in an embroidered image of the sixth of the eighteen arhats. See Huihong 惠洪 (1071-1128), "Xiu Shijia xiang bing shiba luohan zan 繡釋迦像并十八羅漢贊," *Shimen wenzi chan* 石門文字禪, fasc. 15, in J23, no. B135, 661a; translated in Fong, 108. It is intriguing that these early texts refer to the messengers as "demons (or ghosts)," presumably short-hand for "grotesque attendants" of the type that appear in many extant Southern Song arhat paintings.

fantastic variety of physiognomies, textiles, and grotesque attendants, and to experiment with the integration of narrative and iconic modes of painting.¹³¹ In the Daitoku-ji *Five Hundred Arhats*, lightly armed messengers appear with a certain degree of frequency in a variety of guises. Not surprisingly given our analysis of Ten Kings imagery above, the messenger figure that most directly resembles that in the Kṣitigarbha paintings is to be found in the fifth painting in the Daitoku-ji set, which shows five arhats descending into the court of one of the Ten Kings of Purgatory (Figure 3.17). The King stands in front of his silk-covered desk, which is fitted with a brush, brush holder, ink stick, ink stone, and document. He bows slightly, looking up in expectation at the descending deities. Two civil officials of the Netherworld also raise their eyes to behold this fantastic descent, and in the lower-right-hand corner of the image, a cloud-enshrouded, white-robed messenger, who again holds a weapon in the crooks of his arms, gazes upward in anticipation. In other images in the set, similarly dressed figures appear as part of the entourages of deities, as in the fourth painting, which shows a local Earth God and his three attendants—one messenger, one demonic flag-carrier, and a final warrior—gazing reverently at a group of descending arhats (Figure 3.18).¹³² The tenth painting in the set shows a spirit dressed like a more heavily-armed messenger emerging from the earth to present an offering of a fantastic stone to five arhats (Figure 1.49).

Most strikingly, in the sixty-third scroll, an arhat is shown lifting a massive rock that has blocked the mountain path along which a horse-mounted messenger had been ascending (Figure

¹³¹ On the arhat cult and arhat painting in general, see Bong Seok Joo, “The Arhat Cult in China from the Seventh through Thirteenth Centuries: Narrative, Art, Space, and Ritual,” unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2007; and Richard K. Kent, “Depictions of the Guardians of the Law: Lohan Painting in China,” in *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850-1850*, edited by Marsha Weidner (Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art in association with University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 183-213.

¹³² The inscription on the banner reads, “Huian dagong shengzhe 慧安打供聖者”—the “Offering Saint of Huian [yuan],” thus presumably identifying this spirit as the Monastery Guardian of the Huian yuan.

1.47). The messenger, who wears a blue headscarf, silver chest armor over top of a brilliant red blouse, and white pants stuffed into light, green boots, is shown having dismounted his horse—which turns its head to look back directly toward the viewer, as though inviting us to witness this wonder, as well—to bow in thanks before this supernatural feat. Four other arhats, meanwhile, descend between banks of clouds, holding their hands in gestures of reverence or greeting. The lightly-armed figure—whose status as a mundane or supramundane messenger is ambiguous, an ambiguity whose importance will be discussed below—and his horse thus seem to directly prefigure the horse-mounted Messengers of the Three Realms in the late-Ming set of Water-Land paintings at the Musée Guimet discussed above. In an intriguing twist on such images of document transmission, the seventy-fourth painting in the Daitoku-ji set seems to show a comparatively low-ranking earth spirit handing off a white document or tablet to a rather more heavily armed messenger,¹³³ who rushes forth, surrounded by clouds, toward a group of five arhats seated outside of a temple hall in a rocky grotto in the work's middle register (Figure 3.19). The painting gives the sense of watching something like a supramundane postal relay, whereby a message is transmitted from one functionary to the next as it is conveyed from one cosmic realm to the other.

Messengers play prominent, and ultimately cosmically significant roles, in other arhat paintings, such as a thirteenth-century hanging scroll now in a private collection (Figure 1.11). This work depicts a total of more than thirty arhats arranged in five general groups beneath a small rendering of Fangguang si 方廣寺, the temple on Mount Tiantai 天台山 located near to the

¹³³ This figure also wears a sword in his belt and a somewhat different style of hat from those worn by explicitly identified messenger figures in other paintings, which may seem to discount my identification of him as such a figure. Japanese scholars have identified him as a “spirit general 神將”—see, for example, the title given to the work in *Sacred Ningbo*, 150. However, because he does seem to be shown receiving a document from a lower-ranking demon, it may be that his costume is simply an alternative to the more typical type of messenger garb.

Stone Bridge 石橋 over which several “saintly monks 聖僧,” who would later be identified as the Five Hundred Arhats, are said to have first appeared to the fourth-century monk Tanyou 曇猷.¹³⁴ The painting shows the arhats engaged in various activities, including drinking tea, feeding birds, and admiring the supernatural feats of certain of their compatriots. However, the uppermost group of arhats, who seem to form a procession perhaps moving toward Fangguang si, are depicted in the midst of being presented with documents by two messengers. One of these messengers wears a black cap of the same form as that of the armed messenger in the seventy-fourth work in the Daitoku-ji set and is shown in the act of presenting a document to the lead arhats, while the other, who wears a red bandana and carries a weapon in the crook of his arms, seems to serve as a more militaristic guard.¹³⁵ It appears, then, that these arhats have suddenly been summoned, perhaps to attend a ritual in a distant quadrant of the world.

In the late-Southern Song painting of eighteen arhats descending on clouds that is now in the Nara National Museum, which we briefly examined in Chapter 1.3 of this dissertation, a green-booted militaristic figure of slightly heavier build than many of the messengers we have examined so far carries the banner that identifies the procession that he leads as consisting of the “myriad patriarchs and masters of the Chan sect, the Tiantai and Vinaya [sects], translators, and seekers of the dharma of the ten directions of the *dharmadhātu* 十方法界禪宗教律譯經求法諸祖師” (Figure 1.10).¹³⁶ As will be recalled, the text on this banner allows us to link it, and the

¹³⁴ For the primary account of this story, see Huijiao 慧皎 (497-554), *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, fascicle 11, in T50, no. 2059, 395c-396. It is translated in Fong, 2-3, and is discussed in relation to a work from the Daitoku-ji set currently in the Freer Gallery of Art (Figure 1.46).

¹³⁵ Rather more militaristic figures are also visible in the lower-right-hand corner of the painting. Two of them are helmeted and wear heavy armor, and they bow before an arhat at left. The third figure, however, wears a red kerchief and slightly lighter armor, and consequently may represent some sort of messenger.

¹³⁶ See Taniguchi Kōsei 谷口耕生, Entry #119, “Jūhachi rakan zu 十八羅漢圖,” in *Sacred Ningbo*, 312.

banner-bearing attendant figural type more generally, to the Water-Land Retreat. Such banner-bearing messengers are not uncommon in works of the period; a horse-mounted banner-bearing messenger, as well as a more typical weapon-bearing messenger, both appear in the thirteenth-century painting of the tour of Hell conducted by Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory that is now in the collection of Hirokawa-dera 弘川寺 in Osaka, Japan (Figure 1.26).¹³⁷ In this work, a weapon-carrying messenger with a red headscarf follows Kṣitigarbha as he opens the gates of Hell; meanwhile a white-horse-riding messenger, who wears a black cap covered by a red kerchief, and who carries a banner proclaiming himself to be the “Attendant who Leads All Dead Souls 統引領亡魂使者,” rides at the head of a procession of newly-released former Hell-dwellers, leading them to be reborn into a higher path of existence. Such figures appear in works as early as the illustrated handscrolls of the *Sutra on the Ten Kings* recovered from Mogao Cave 17, and independent icons of these Hell messengers were even included in sets of the Ten Kings during the Southern Song and after, as an exemplar in the collection of the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History 神奈川県立歴史博物館 attests (Figure 3.20). This latter work shows a messenger attired in the way we have come to expect, including green boots, a black hat, and a red headscarf, about to mount his black horse. He is surrounded by three demonic attendants—one heavily armored and holding his master’s horse, a second wearing a light infantry helmet and carrying a massive, three-tailed banner, and a third about to pass to his master a large document box fitted with a shoulder strap. These figures are all shown standing

¹³⁷ Further, Takasu Jun 鷹巣純 identifies both of these figures as “tally-bearing messengers 持符使者” in his iconographic diagram of the work. See Takasu Jun, “Hirokawa-dera hon Jizō jūō zu to suiriku-ga,” in *Han Ajia no bukkuyō bijutsu* 汎アジアの仏教美術, edited by Miyaji Akira Sensei kentei ronbunshū henshū iinkai 宮治昭先生 献呈論文集編集委員会 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Bijutsu Shuppan, 2007), 359.

on a vegetal-red cloud bank, whose tail winds back and forth to the upper-right-hand corner of the composition.

Daoist Prototypes

Caroline Gyss-Vermande has already traced the iconographic origins of such messenger figures to horse-mounted heavenly message-carriers described in early texts and depicted in Han-dynasty stone carvings; such figures transmitted documents particularly to the Queen Mother of the West 西王母.¹³⁸ As Gyss-Vermande briefly notes, a wide variety of messengers appear especially commonly in Daoist texts and rituals; indeed, given the prominent use of bureaucratic documents in such rituals, it is no surprise that a sophisticated legion of messengers should have developed within that liturgical context. In the *Daomen zhiding*, for example, groups of messengers including both the Four Messengers in Charge of the Year, Month, Day, and Hour found in the Water-Land Retreat, as well as the Messengers of the Offices of the Three Realms 三界功曹使者, are to be found.¹³⁹ A division between temporal and spatial messengers is thus established, which would later be elided in the Water-Land Retreat, which seems to map the functions of the latter onto the former. By the Southern Song, at least some Daoist ritualists seem to have confused the two, as well. The final fascicle of the *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (*Daoist Methods, United in Principle*), a vast compilation of Daoist liturgies, particularly of Thunder Rites 雷法, likely completed in the fifteenth century, ends with an illuminating discussion of such figures.¹⁴⁰ This passage, entitled “Beidi yi ge 北帝儀格” (“Format of the Rite

¹³⁸ Gyss-Vermande, “Les Messagers divins et leur iconographie,” 107-108.

¹³⁹ Lü Yuansu 呂元素 (act. late twelfth century), *Daomen zhiding* (CT 1224), 1188, fasc. 3, in ZHDZ, vol. 42, 575 and 578.

¹⁴⁰ *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (CT 1220), fasc. 268, in ZHDZ, vol. 38, 514c-515a. For an introduction to this text, see *The Taoist Canon*, vol. 2, 1105-1113.

of the Northern Emperor”), begins with the reflections of Zheng Zhiwei 鄭知微, a ritualist who most likely was active during the late Southern Song and who is acknowledged as the compiler of several of the final fascicles of the *Daofa huiyuan*, which treat rites related to Netherworld.

We are told:

Zhiwei once heard his master say: “The Messengers of the Four Duties are messengers of Heaven and Earth; their position is not a frivolous one, for they are in charge of the affairs of the Four Realms—that is, the Realms of Heaven, Earth, Water, and Mortals.” Further, he said: “Years, months, days, and hours are the Four Duties. The god of each has its bureau and is in charge of affairs in the human world. They take charge of all documents that humans are supposed to have, transmitting the feelings and requests of humans, carrying them up to the ministries above while also inspecting the good and evil affairs of humans. Each has his entourage. An Official of Methods [that is, a Daoist ritualist] issues texts, inviting [them] to carry talismans and petitions; this is like a human circuit supervisor’s issuing ministerial texts. A Daoist master issues texts just like a human acting-governor issues ministerial texts.

知微嘗聞先師曰：四直使者，乃天地之奉使，其位非輕，職掌四界事，是名天界地界水界陽界也。又曰：年月日時，四直也。其神各有其府，掌人間事。凡人間應有詞狀，並係所掌，通傳人間情懇，上達省院及兼察人間善惡之事。其屬各有佐吏。如法官發傳文字，請持符奏，則如人間監司發傳省司文字，道士發傳文字，則如人間守尹發省司文字一般。¹⁴¹

In other words, the precise definition of the Four Duties was open to some debate. These duties could be either spatial or temporal, yet both ultimately involved both the inspection of the sincerity of the ritual proceedings and the transmission of messages. The precise position of these messengers within the supramundane bureaucracy is further specified by Zheng, who also gives us some sense of the history of these functionaries. He writes:

If an Official of Methods orders a “Tally-Bearer” to carry a petition, the “carrier of the tally” is then a “Tally-Bearing Officer,” who goes back and forth from here to there, reaching the ministries above, sending to the wheel of the sun, never disturbing order. From the time that the Heavenly Master opened the teachings, one has had to [rely] on special military officials to carry and uphold [one’s commands]. Like the human Defender-in-Chief controls military officials, special assistants transmit texts back and forth, their speed well known.

¹⁴¹ *Daofa huiyuan*, fasc. 268, in ZHDZ, vol. 38, 514c.

若法官 關直符捧奏，持符則直符司，即便逐一遞傳，進達省院輪日呈進，永無亂叙。自天師開教，必專差將吏捧持。正如人間太尉節制兵官，專差軍校傳遞文字，其捷可知。¹⁴²

Such messengers have thus been essential to Daoist ritual from the very beginning. And importantly, these messengers have always been of a decidedly martial bearing.

However, Zheng also points to the limits of these lightly-armed messengers, and ultimately makes an argument in favor of using another type of military functionary, the marshal 元帥; this argument may do much to explain the relative similarity between the costumes of messengers and marshals in many paintings from the Song to the present. Zheng begins his argument by observing how numerous are the petitions to be submitted to the bureaucracies of both the celestial and netherworldly spheres. He writes:

And like the Gate of the Emperor of Purple Tenuity, which is the master of the ten thousand signs and the stars and planets, humans worship and petition, exhaustively enjoining his officials; the texts and petitions are extremely many. Concurrently controlling the punishments of Fengdu, the texts of punishments are also many and complicated.

且如紫微帝闕，是萬象星辰之主也，人間襍奏，盡屬其司，文字章奏，極為繁夥。兼主管酆都刑獄，則刑獄文字尤為浩繁。¹⁴³

The complexity of this bureaucracy, Zheng seems to suggest, may well exhaust the powers of the messengers. Thus he asks, “If one tries to send the tally-bearers to transmit [texts], how can they speedily reach Xuandu 若使發直符傳達，又豈能速詣玄都 也?”¹⁴⁴ This crucial question leads him to his ultimate argument: that one ought to rely on a more powerful marshal, who can better protect and more speedily transmit the many documents entrusted to him. Zheng thus argues:

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 514c-515a.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 515a.

For this reason, one should use the Four-Eyed Old Man of the Bureau of Marshals. His powers are complete, his speed without pair. He crosses like cosmic winds, and demons do not dare encroach [upon him]. Order him to carry a petition and it will reach the pivot of the stars. Now we specially record this here.

是故當用元帥府四目老翁，其神通備足，捷疾無雙，徑度罡風，魔無干犯，關令捧奏，即達星樞。今特具錄于此。¹⁴⁵

From this text, then, it seems that the Four-Eyed Old Man of the Bureau of Marshals can thus replace the messengers. However, elsewhere in the same fascicle, the Marshal is instead ordered merely to accompany the Messengers in order to protect them.

More interestingly for an investigation of the place of the messengers in the Water-Land Retreat, Zheng also comments rather disparagingly on Buddhists' misuse of documents, which the messengers themselves—here seemingly considered to be Daoist adepts themselves—looked on with disdain. He writes:

Later, improperly trained masters (?) participated in methods and received registers. As for the texts issued by false prophets and the teachings of the Western barbarians, the various messengers looked on these like the complaints of humans of this world. How could they dare to transmit them to the Court of Heaven?

至後有等素未經師參法受籙，而冒妄行持之士，並及西夷之教，所發文字，諸使者視如陽間民人詞狀，豈肯便為傳達於天廷耶。¹⁴⁶

Having never received revealed texts from the celestial bureaucracy, Buddhists, it seems, have no idea how to make use of such documents, relying instead on this-worldly models that could never be conscionably transmitted to the deities above. Thus, the Messengers refuse to transmit such improper documents.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 514c.

¹⁴⁷ Zheng in fact ends his essay with further comments on the necessity of proper formatting when presenting documents. This tendency to (mis)treat the supramundane in the manner by which one might also treat the mundane extended even to Daoist practitioners. We are told that

Military Messengers of the Mundane World

The above citations provide a very clear sense of the sophistication of Daoist conceptions of the supramundane postal system in the Song and before. However, a more proximate, this-worldly model for the militaristic appearance of the messengers figures that suddenly appear everywhere in Song Buddhist painting may be found in the Song postal service itself. Emperor Taizu 太祖 (927-976; r. 960-976) specifically issued edicts transferring the burden of manning postal stations from commoners, as had been true in previous dynasties, to the military.¹⁴⁸ This transfer seems to have increased the general efficiency of the system. Further, the postal system came to offer varying speeds of service, with edicts from the emperor being transferred at a (theoretical) speed of up to five hundred *li* per day. The speed of service was indicated by the material, color, and text color of the plaque 牌 that accompanied the document and that served, in a sense, as a stamp. Given the militarization and increasing specialization of the postal service during the Song, phenomena which only intensified during the Yuan dynasty, it is perhaps unsurprising that the messenger, who came to play so prominent a role in Buddhist ritual of the period, would be depicted as just such a lightly armored military figure.

Lixing once heard Master Du, Sovereign Jun, say: “When Master Lu typically issues petitions, he uses yellow paper for the envelope; now people often use white paper, like the envelopes used in the human world. But Weitian still dares not use it, for how could one dare to petition the emperor and use a white envelope?” What he said is truly reasoned. Thus, I write this at the end to admonish later people. Written by Zuo Luoxing, Ritual Master of the Great Cavern of Highest Purity.

力行嘗聞度師丁君云：盧君平日發奏，用黃紙為函，今人多用白紙，譬如人間往來書函。然未添尚不敢用，況乎奏帝而可用白函者乎。所說甚當理。故書以為後人戒。上清大洞法師左力行書。

Ibid., 515a.

¹⁴⁸ A brief overview, including references to the relevant primary sources, is given in Zhu Duanxi 朱瑞熙 et al., *Song Liao Xi Xia Jin shehui shenghuo shi* 宋遼西夏金社會生活史 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1998), 101.

From the Messenger to the Cosmos

The question that remains, then, is why, exactly, this bureaucratic conception of the cosmos, of ritual practice, and of the figures necessary to ensure their functioning would come to be incorporated into rituals like the Water-Land Retreat. The arhat painting from the private collection discussed above gives a pictorial clue, whose broader implications I will examine below through an analysis of manuals for the Water-Land Retreat (Figure 1.11). Essentially, this painting gives us a privileged view of arhats in their own semi-divine space beyond the Stone Bridge near Fangguang si. These figures are thus somewhat removed from the mundane world, yet nevertheless connected to a specific geographic location within it. Their geographic locatedness seems to imply their occupying a place in a conception of the world rather different from the more traditional Mahayanist vision of a vertically stacked cosmos, in which hierarchically layering the various realms inhabited by beings of differing levels of spiritual advancement, and describing perfectly symmetrical systems of mountains and waters, seems to have been of greater concern than mapping out topography as it was actually experienced (Figure 3.21). These arhats—who, after all, were understood to be the guardians of the dharma until the descent of the future buddha Maitreya—, in a sense, seem to imply the convergence of Buddhist and non-Buddhist conceptions of the cosmos. As soon as a strictly Buddhist conception of the cosmos is abandoned, and conceptions more closely rooted in geography or in other religious traditions are taken seriously, it seems that documents, and hence, messengers, became necessary to communicate with these newly-geographicized deities. Having looked closely at the rites related to messengers and to the opening of the Five Roads in the Water-Land Retreat, we have seen that it was, precisely, these militaristic message-carriers who were essential to mediating

among different realms of the cosmos, ultimately weaving together the tapestry of cosmic conceptions that differentiates the Water-Land Retreat from all earlier Buddhist rituals.

This sense of the collision of differing visions of the cosmos mediated largely through the exchange of bureaucratic documents becomes even clearer, in a structural and compositional sense, when we consider the Water-Land pantheon in its entirety, and in particular, when we examine holistic visual representations of it. The structural model of a bureaucratic realm transcended by Buddhist figures who themselves are simultaneously integrated into and removed from that realm, which we examined above in relation to depictions of Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory, ultimately provides the model by which to understand the place of bureaucracy within the Water-Land Retreat and its visual productions.

As we saw in Chapter 1.1, the vast range of deities summoned during the ritual is fundamentally structured around the traditional Buddhist Ten Realms 十界, which consist of 1) buddhas 佛, 2) bodhisattvas 菩薩, 3) *pratyekabuddhas* 緣覺, 4) *śrāvakas* (i.e., arhats) 聲聞, 5) *devas* 天, 6) humans 人, 7) *asuras* 阿修羅, 8) animals 畜生, 9) hungry ghosts 餓鬼, and 10) Hell-dwellers 地獄. Each variant of the ritual reconfigures and/or expands these Ten Realms in individual ways. The variant of the ritual championed by Yang E 楊諤 (1032-1098) and Su Shi, and which was also adopted by the practitioners of the Yunnanese *Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai* 重廣水陸法施無遮大齋 tradition, makes use of sixteen seats divided into two “halls 堂” of eight seats each.¹⁴⁹ While respecting the fundamental division between the four enlightened paths of the Ten Realms and the six lower paths of mundane beings, Yang E manipulated these classes to create a somewhat more expanded, and specifically Song, pantheon.

¹⁴⁹ These spirits are listed in Appendix 1.

To form the eight seats of the Upper Hall 上堂, he added to the four enlightened classes of beings the Two Treasures of the Dharma 法 and the Sangha 僧, as well as benevolent protective deities such as the spirits and immortals of the five penetrations 五通神仙 and the dharma-protecting *devas* and dragons 天龍八部—spirits that might be considered something like enlightened, or at least eternally benevolent, protectors. To create the Lower Hall, he first divided the human path into two classes, placing officials and their attendants 官僚吏從 at the head of all of the classes of the Lower Hall 下堂, as though to suggest that it is these venerable bureaucrats that govern the terrestrial sphere of which all of the remaining spirits are a part. Further, he added the final category of beings outside of the Six Paths 六道外者—that is, wandering ghosts who have yet to be reborn, the very beings that are the ultimate object of the salvific actions of the Water-Land Retreat. Although Yang E has introduced an eminently bureaucratic element to the pantheon, something that I would suggest might be seen as distinctly post-Tang, his pantheon remains, however, largely Buddhist in nature: all of the beings that he summons—with the exception of the wandering ghosts summoned last—can be neatly fitted into the classes of the Ten Realms.

Looking to the twenty-six classes of Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy, the modular nature of the Water-Land Retreat's pantheon, and, in particular, its mapping of multiple cosmic systems onto one another, becomes clearer.¹⁵⁰ Zhipan and Zhuhong have maintained the basic bi-partite structure of Yang E's pantheon, though they have expanded the Upper Hall to include spirit kings 神王—another class of protective deity—and the Ten Great Masters of the Water-Land Retreat 製儀立法十大士, figures that, while largely belonging to the sangha, do not directly fit

¹⁵⁰ These spirits are listed in Appendix 1.

into any of the classes of Yang E's pantheon or of the Ten Realms, serving instead to exemplify the historicity of the ritual itself. In this sense, the pantheon has begun to expand temporally. Most dramatically, Zhipan and Zhuhong have expanded the Lower Hall to include more explicitly figures drawn from the pantheons of Daoism, state, and popular religion—e.g., planetary and terrestrial deities, who are only briefly mentioned in the first two classes of Yang E's Lower Hall—, as well as members of the infernal bureaucracy and local deities, none of whom appear in Yang E's pantheon. The pantheon thus becomes spatially expansive, as a geographic conception of the cosmos indigenous to China is combined with the more ontological conception of the Ten Realms. Further, Zhipan and Zhuhong also specifically name the spirits of the ancestors of the ritual's sponsor and honor the patriarchs of the ritualists' lineage, thus lending an air of quasi-Confucian concern with ancestor worship to the ritual. Most importantly, they expand the class of Beings Outside of the Six Paths to include twelve specifically named categories of wandering ghosts, emphasizing the universally salvific funerary character of the ritual that had come to take precedence over the course of the Song. Finally, within each general class of beings, Zhipan and Zhuhong specifically name at least ten individual figures; much like Jin Yunzhong in the Daoist context, Yang E and Su Shi, on the other hand, had remained content to merely invoke the general category of being without naming the specific spirits to be invoked. In this manner, then, the pantheon has not only been expanded spatially and temporally but also specified. The modules (class of beings) that make up the pantheon now contain individuated elements—that is, specifically named figures. New modules derived from the pantheons of indigenous Chinese religions have been added, and earlier modules have been sub-divided and manipulated, while still respecting the general pantheistic syntax derived from the bi-partite division inherent to the conception of the Ten Realms.

Things begin to become more complicated, however, when we (re-)consider the myriad spirits of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* tradition established by Zongze, one hundred twenty of which are specifically listed in order that they may be represented by both tablet and image.¹⁵¹ As will be remembered from Chapters 1.1 and 1.3 of this dissertation, Zongze and the subsequent *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* tradition proposed a tri-partite division of the pantheon that seems to contravene the model derived from the bi-partite conception of the Ten Realms proposed in other variants of the ritual. The upper division contains various Buddhist beings that are not listed among the one hundred twenty spirits but whose identities are enumerated fully in the main body of the ritual manual. The specifically named spirits, on the other hand, are essentially those of the middle and lower classes of the tri-partite pantheon of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*. Direct comparison between the pantheon of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* and the pantheons of Yang E's and Zhipan and Zhuhong's variants becomes difficult, as the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* does not neatly divide the spirits summoned into classes, making use only of broad categories such as “principal seats 正位” and “*devas* and immortals 天仙.” Nevertheless, although the array of spirits in this variant of the ritual may appear dizzying, it fundamentally differs little from the pantheon summoned in Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy; the essential classes of spirits remain the same, despite the reorganization of the pantheon from a bi-partite structure to a tri-partite structure, and despite the summoning of spirits by individual name rather than by class. Once we begin to compare the individual identities of the spirits summoned, slight differences between the two pantheons emerge; certain spirits—most notably, protective deities such as the Four Saints 四聖 appropriated directly from the Daoist pantheon—are present in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* but absent in Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy, and

¹⁵¹ These myriad spirits are listed in Appendix 1.

vice versa, thus confirming that the Water-Land pantheon might indeed be seen as having been modularly conceived. Thus, one might suggest that so long as the basic pantheistic syntax remained intact, individual constitutive elements—that is, specific spirits—could be manipulated at will, as is also true of bureaucratic government or corporate structures. If one can conceive of the Water-Land Retreat as a general ritual paradigm that exists independent of individual practitioners, one sees that these various variants of the ritual show that summoned spirits, like the specific rites that come together to form the liturgy as a whole, can be swapped in and out of the liturgy according to the needs and desires of the ritual sponsors and practitioners. This, I would suggest, speaks to a modular conception of ritual practice and of the pantheon that may ultimately reflect a broader concern with the bureaucratization of the cosmos, itself predicated on the modular interchangeability of individual constituent elements.

Focusing more specifically on the underlying structure of the pantheon of the Water-Land Retreat, particularly as embodied in Zhipan and Zhuhong's liturgy and in the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen*, we see that it has been constructed in a manner that seeks to integrate multiple models of the cosmos in a decidedly hierarchical fashion. The Mahayanist Ten Realms certainly seems to provide the basic structure, as Zhipan and Zhuhong themselves directly acknowledge.¹⁵² And yet the majority of the spirits summoned during the ritual find no easy place within that structure. Unenlightened, and hence banished from the Upper Hall, and yet neither deva nor asura nor human, the myriad bureaucrats of the Heavens, of Earth, and of the Hells could not be easily accommodated within traditional Buddhist conceptions of the paths of rebirth. They were nevertheless frequently propitiated by Buddhist monks and laity alike from the late Tang onward. To deal with these figures that were, essentially, responsible for all

¹⁵² See FJSF, fasc. 1, 787c.

aspects of the daily lives of these worshippers and of the world in which they found themselves, ritualists placed them in between the saints and commoners of the Ten Realms. Thus, a complete horizontal, spatial cosmic model directly appropriated from Daoism and state religion was grafted into the vertical model of cosmic ontology inherent to the Ten Realms. These were, then, deities that were simultaneously to be worshipped for the role that they played in daily life and that were also to be converted to the Buddha's path. And it was for the sake of communicating with these deities that bureaucratic practice became necessary. The bureaucratic idiom becomes, in a sense, duplicitous. Buddhist ritualists appropriated the communicative idiom and medium of these myriad spirits conceptualized within alternative religious traditions, and they used that idiom and that medium to instrumentalize those spirits in protecting the Buddhist ritual space and in ensuring that all of the myriad beings of the cosmos would be able to assemble within that space; further, they used those spirits' idiom and medium of communication in order to summon them to be, themselves, converted to the Buddha's path. Bureaucracy becomes but an expedient means to ensure the ultimate dominance of a Buddhist vision of the cosmos. Most importantly, and most duplicitously, by crowning the Buddha as the Awakened Emperor, the ritualists superficially place the Buddha at the pinnacle of that bureaucracy, but only so that he may transcend that role after ensuring the awakening of the myriad spirits under his command.

The Visual Structure of the Cosmos

It is precisely this dialectical vision of the cosmos—wherein the Buddhist Ten Realms coexist with the spatial realm of Daoism and state religion, yet in which the superiority of the Buddhist vision ultimately prevails—that structures all artworks produced in the context of the Water-Land Retreat. The general divisions among the various types of spirits summoned are directly reinforced through the compositions of the paintings employed in the ritual. As we

know from sets of hanging scrolls like the Ming-dynasty examples preserved at Baoning si, as well as from earlier murals such as those at Qinglong si discussed in Chapter 2.1, the modes of depicting the various classes of spirits differ: the most exalted beings are depicted frontally, manifesting before welling cloudbanks (Figures 3.1 and 2.2), while the myriad lesser spirits enumerated in the manual are shown descending diagonally on clouds, as though assembling materially before the ethereal manifestations of the buddhas and bodhisattvas above (Figures 2.19 and 2.13). Meanwhile, arhats are often depicted in narrative scenes, perhaps alluding to their eternal dwelling simultaneously in our world yet beyond it; while wandering spirits, whose manners of death are described with great detail, are shown in narrative scenes that pictorialize the spirits' gruesome ends.

In the Qinglong si mural, these ontological divisions are vertically arrayed; the buddhas and bodhisattvas manifest themselves among the banks of clouds and bands of *qi* of the uppermost register of the composition, dominating the lesser, albeit more material, spirits that assemble below. It is, of course, these lower, more material beings that are the objects of all bureaucratic communication throughout the performance of the ritual. As we saw in the conclusion to Chapter 2.3, however, the key figure in the composition is the monk at center, who is depicted from behind, bowing his head as though simultaneously reciting mantras of summoning and visualizing the manifestation and materialization of the myriad spirits that surround him (Figure 2.12). His position in the composition is essential. Kneeling before an altar table, he is separated from the buddhas above only by this essential accoutrement of ritual and by a welling bank of clouds that almost seems to be generated by the incense burner in front of him. He has been placed among the myriad spirits of the mundane world; these are the spirits of the celestial and terrestrial bureaucracies adopted from the geographic pantheon of Daoism

and state religion, the spirits that govern the this-worldly lives both of the monk himself and of us viewer-worshippers. Thanks to his central position and his being simultaneously separated from and sutured to the saints above through the motifs of the altar table and clouds, it becomes clear that this monk, a representative of the monastic body, is the medium through which we viewer-worshippers, and the myriad spirits of the mundane world, can escape this realm dominated by bureaucracy, thus gaining access to the transcendental space of the buddhas above. The compositional model that we examined with regard to depictions of Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings, those paradigmatic representations of the bureaucratized Buddhist cosmos, resonates profoundly.

Conclusion

In the end, then, perhaps “bureaucracy” is a bit of a red herring within the context of the Water-Land Retreat. Certainly, the textual, material, performative, and pictorial traces of this conceptual structure are manifold and manifest in the ritual. And yet, these traces exist only in order to be transcended in pursuit of a rather more familiar vision of the Buddhist cosmos. We might ask, then, why this duplicitously bureaucratic vision of the cosmos became relevant to Buddhist practitioners of the Water-Land Retreat in the Song and after. One necessarily wonders if these bureaucratic forms of practice were adopted as a means, simply, of integrating and ultimately asserting dominance over competing religious traditions. After all, the Song saw intense competition among Buddhist, Daoist, vernacular, and even Confucian practitioners of ritual, especially mortuary rites, and each tradition borrowed extensively from the others, without necessarily acknowledging their debts. As the pantheon summoned in the Water-Land Retreat reveals, Buddhist practitioners seem to have been especially eager to appropriate and Buddhicize the myriad spirits of the cosmos, enlisting them to ensure the universal efficacy of their liturgies.

If bureaucratic forms of communication were necessary to deal with such spirits, bureaucratic documents and idioms would be adopted, as well. Moreover, as we saw above, Southern Song Daoist ritualists themselves saw specific kinds of bureaucratic documents as ensuring the broadest efficacy of ritual practice possible. The Water-Land Retreat, as practiced at least from the Southern Song onward, directly appropriates these most-broadly efficacious forms of communication. Further, it adapts that model to serve as structure for everything from ritual practice to liturgical art. Although ultimately transcended, the bureaucratic idiom nevertheless lies at the heart of the Water-Land Retreat. Perhaps the villagers of Shibi Township, who concluded their highly Daoicized performance of the Water-Land Retreat in 1210 by memorializing to the Offices of Heaven, Earth, and Water, were not as eccentric as later, reformist practitioners of the ritual might have us believe.

APPENDIX 1: Pantheons

Table 1: The Ten Realms 十界

Upper (Saintly 聖) Four Paths	Lower (Mundane 凡) Six Paths 六道
1) buddhas 佛	1) <i>devas</i> 天
2) bodhisattvas 菩薩	2) humans 人
3) <i>pratyekabuddhas</i> 緣覺	3) <i>asuras</i> 阿修羅
4) <i>śrāvakas</i> (i.e., arhats) 聲聞	4) animals 畜生
	5) hungry ghosts 餓鬼
	6) Hell-dwellers 地獄

Table 2: The Sixteen Seats of the Water-Land Retreats of Yang E 楊諤 (1032-1098), Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101), and the Yunnanese *Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai* 重廣水陸法施無遮大齋

(N.B.: * indicates classes adopted from the Ten Realms schema)

	Upper Hall 上堂	Lower Hall 下堂
Three Treasures 三寶	1) the Buddhas 佛陀耶 *	1) officials and their attendants 官僚吏從
	2) the Dharma 達摩耶	2) <i>devas</i> of the three worlds 三界諸天 *
	3) the Sangha 僧伽耶	3) <i>asuras</i> 阿修羅 *
	4) bodhisattvas 菩薩 *	4) humans 人道 *
	5) <i>pratyekabuddhas</i> 辟支佛 *	5) hungry ghosts 餓鬼道 *
	6) arhats 阿羅漢 *	6) animals 畜生道 *
	7) spirits and immortals of the five penetrations 五通神仙	7) Hell-dwellers 地獄道 *
	8) dharma-protecting <i>devas</i> and dragons 護法天龍	8) beings outside of the six paths 六道外者

Table 3: The Twenty-Four Seats of Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275) and Zhuhong's 祿宏 (1535-1615) *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌

(N.B.: * indicates classes adopted from the Ten Realms schema; # indicates classes adopted from the sixteen-seat schema established by Yang E)

	Upper Hall 上堂	Lower Hall 下堂
Three Treasures 三寶	1) the Buddhas 佛陀耶 * #	1) deities of the celestial bureaucracy (e.g., planetary gods)
	2) the Dharma 達摩耶 #	2) deities of the terrestrial bureaucracy (e.g., gods of the mountains and rivers)
	3) bodhisattva-monks 菩薩僧 * #	3) officials of the human bureaucracy, including famed Confucian and Daoist figures #
	4) <i>pratyekabuddha</i> -monks 圓覺僧 * #	4) humans of various occupations * #
	5) <i>śrāvaka</i> -monks 聲聞僧 * #	5) <i>asuras</i> * #
	6) patriarch-monks 祖師僧 #	6) hungry ghosts and wandering spirits * #
	7) spirits and immortals of the five penetrations 五通神仙 #	7) the Ten Kings of Purgatory and their attendants
	8) <i>devarājas</i> 天王 and <i>devas</i> 天 * #	8) Hell-dwellers * #
	9) spirit kings 神王	9) animals * #
	10) the Ten Great Masters of the Water-Land Retreat 製儀立法十大士	10) denizens of Purgatory awaiting rebirth
		11) local gods
		12) guardians of the monastery
		13) spirits of the deceased members of the Sponsor's family
		14) spirits of the deceased clergy and laity of the monastery

N.B.: The wandering spirits of people who have suffered any of twelve different types of violent deaths—everyone from soldiers killed in far-off lands, to the victims of pirates and women who died in labor—are separately invoked.

The One Hundred Twenty Places 牌 of the *Tiandi mingyang shuilu zhai* 天地冥陽水陸齋¹⁵³:

The left 左 group: 1) the assembly of the Four Formless Heavens of the Formless Realm 無色界四空天眾; 2) the assembly of the Four Dhyāna Heavens of the Form Realm 色界四禪天眾; 3) the King of the Great Brahma Heaven 大梵天王; 4) the Master of the Upper Four Heavens of the Realm of Desire and the Various *Devas* 欲界上天主並諸天眾; 5) Indra, the Master of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three *Devas* and the Various *Devas* 忉利帝釋天主並諸天眾; 6) Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the Heavenly King of the East 東方持國天王; 7) Virūdhaka, the Heavenly King of the South 南方增長天王; 8) Virūpākṣa, the Heavenly King of the West 西方廣目天王; 9) Vaiśravaṇa, the Heavenly King of the North 北方多聞天王; 10) the Great Emperor of Purple Tenuity of the Northern Extremity 北極紫微大帝; 11) the myriad gods of Great Unity 太一諸神; 12) the Five Emperors of the Five Directions 五方五帝; 13) the Prince of the Sun 日光天子; 14) the Prince of the Moon 月光天子; 15) the Perfected Sovereign of Venus 金星真君; 16) the Perfected Sovereign of Jupiter 木星真君; 17) the Perfected Sovereign of Mercury 水星真君; 18) the Perfected Sovereign of Mars 火星真君; 19) the Perfected Sovereign of Saturn 土星真君; 20) the Sovereign Star Rāhu 羅睺星君; 21) the Sovereign Star Ketu 計都星君; 22) the Sovereign Star Ziqi 紫炁星君; 23) the Sovereign Star Yuebo 月孛星君; 24) and 25) the twelve divine mansions 神宮 of the zodiac; 26) and 27) the twelve earthly branches 十二支; 28) to 31) the twenty-eight heavenly mansions 二十八宿; 32) the Seven Prime Star Sovereigns of the Northern Dipper 北斗七元星君; 33) all the myriad star sovereigns 普天列曜一切星君; 34) the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water 天地水三官眾; 35) the Four Perfected Sovereigns Tianpeng, Tianyou, Yisheng, and Xuanwu 天蓬天猷翊聖玄武真君; 36) the Sovereign of the Bureau of the Department of Heaven 天曹府君; 37) the Judge of the Register of Life of the Department of Heaven 天曹掌祿筭判官; 38) the Judges of the Various Offices of the Department of Heaven 天曹諸司判官; 39) the Four Messengers in Charge of the Year, Month, Day, and Hour 年月日時四直使者; 40) *asuras*; 41) the great *rākṣasas* 大羅剎眾; 42) *rākṣasīs* 羅剎女眾; 43) the Great General of the Wild [Ghosts] 曠野大將眾; 44) the Great General Pāṇcika 般支迦大將眾; 45) Kumbhāṇḍa demons 矩畔拏眾; 46) Hārītī 訶利帝母眾; 47) the great *yakṣas* 大藥叉眾; 48) the emperors, kings, and all of the princes of the past 往古帝王一切王子眾; 49) the palace ladies of the past 往古妃后宮嬪嫔女眾; 50) the civil and military officials of the past 往古文武官僚眾; 51) all soldiers who died for their country of the past 往古為國亡軀一切將士眾; 52) *bhikṣus* of the past 往古比丘眾; 53) *bhikṣuṇīs* of the past 往古比丘尼眾; 54) *upāsakas* of the past 往古優婆塞眾; 55) *upāsikās* of the past 往古優婆夷眾; 56) Daoists of the past 往古道士眾; 57) female Daoists of the past 往古女冠眾; 58) Confucian sages of the past 往古儒流賢士眾; 59) filial sons of the past 往古孝子順孫眾; 60) exemplary women of the past 往古賢婦烈女眾; 61) myriad scholars of the past 往古九流百家眾.

The right 右 group: 1) the Saintly Mother of the Earth 后土聖母; 2) the Saintly Emperor of the Eastern Marchmount 東嶽天齊仁聖帝; 3) the Saintly Emperor of the Southern Marchmount 南

¹⁵³ TDMY, “Tan tu shi 壇圖式,” 16a-17b.

嶽司天昭聖帝; 4) the Saintly Emperor of the Western Marchmount 西嶽金天順聖帝; 5) the Saintly Emperor of the Northern Marchmount 北嶽安天元聖帝; 6) the Saintly Emperor of the Central Marchmount 中嶽中天崇聖帝; 7) the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea 東海龍王; 8) the Dragon King of the Southern Sea 南海龍王; 9) the Dragon King of the Western Sea 西海龍王; 10) the Dragon King of the Northern Sea 北海龍王; 11) the Various Dragon Spirits of the Yangzi, Huang, Huai, and Ji Rivers 江河淮濟四瀆諸龍神眾; 12) the Various Dragon Spirits of the Five Lakes and Hundred Streams 五湖百川諸龍神眾; 13) the Various Dragon Spirits of Lakes, Ponds, Wells, and Springs 陂池井泉諸龍神眾; 14) the Various Dragon Spirits that Control Wind, Rain, Thunder, and Lightning 主風主雨主雷主電諸龍神眾; 15) the Various Dragon Spirits that Control Seedlings, Grains, Diseases, and Medicines 主苗主稼主病主藥諸龍神眾; 16) the Various Dragon Spirits that Guard the Retreat and Protect the Precepts 守齋護戒諸龍神眾; 17) the Great Emperor of the Department of Water of the Three Primes 三元水府大帝; 18) the Dragon King Shunji 順濟龍王; 19) the Lady Anji 安濟夫人; 20) the Spirits of Taisui, Taisha, Boshi, the Sun, and the Moon 太歲太煞博士日遊太陰神眾; 21) the Five Demons and the Silkworm Official 大將軍黃幡白虎蚕官五鬼眾; 22) animal spirits 金神飛鳥豹尾上朔日畜眾; 23) memorial-transmitting protective spirits 陰官奏書歸忌九坎伏兵力士眾; 24) spirits of condolence 弔客喪門大耗小耗宅龍神眾; 25) the State- and Populace-Protecting City Gods, the Spirits of Local Shrines, and the Earth Gods 護國護民城隍社廟土地神祇眾; 26) the Great King Guang of Qin 秦廣大王; 27) the Great King of the First River 初江大王; 28) the Great King Di of Song 宋帝大王; 29) the Great King of the Five Offices 五官大王; 30) the Great King Yama 閻羅大王; 31) the Great King of Transformations 變成大王; 32) the Great King of Mt. Tai 泰山大王; 33) the Great Impartial King 平等大王; 34) the Great King of the Capital 都市大王; 35) the Great King Who Turns the Wheel [of Rebirth] 轉輪大王; 36) the Judges of the Six Departments of the Bureau of Earth 地府六曹判官; 37) the Judges of the Three Offices of the Bureau of Earth 地府三司判官; 38) the Judges of the Main Office of the Bureau of Earth 地府都司判官; 39) the General of the Five Paths of the Bureau of Earth 地府五道將軍; 40) the Recorders of Good and Evil, the Ox-Headed Torturer, and the Various Officials 善惡二部牛頭阿傍諸官曹眾; 41) the denizens of the Eight Cold Hells 八寒地獄; 42) the denizens of the Eight Hot Hells 八熱地獄; 43) the denizens of the Hell of Nearing Extremity 近邊地獄; 43) the denizens of the Hell of Loneliness 孤獨地獄; 44) Ānanda and the Burning-Face Ghost King 起教大士面然鬼王; 45) the Ghost King Who Controls Sickness and the Messengers of the Five Plagues 主病鬼王五瘟使者; 46) hungry ghosts 六腹臭毛針咽巨口飲噉不淨飢火熾然眾; 47) wandering ghosts 水陸空居依草附木幽魂滯魄無主無依眾; 48) to 57) the ghosts 鬼神 of people killed in various ways; 58) the myriad sentient beings of the paths of Hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, and animals 地獄餓鬼傍生道中一切有情眾; 59) sentient beings of the Six Paths and the Four Types of Birth 六道四生中中有情眾。

Besides these mundane spirits, which are conveniently listed in the “Tantu shi 壇圖式” (“Model Altars and Charts”) fascicle of the *Tiandi mingyang shuili yiwén*, the following Buddhist saints are also summoned in the first fascicle of the manual:

1) Buddhas: 1) Vairocana 法身毗盧遮那佛; 2) Rocana 報身盧舍那佛; 3) Śākyamuni 化身釋迦牟尼佛; 4) Maitreya 彌勒尊佛; 5) Bhaiṣajyaguru 藥師琉璃光佛; 6) Amitābha 阿彌陀佛. The Five Directional Buddhas 五方佛 and Seven Buddhas of rites of food bestowal are summoned elsewhere in the manual.

2) Bodhisattvas: 1) Avalokiteśvara 觀世音菩薩; 2) Mañjuśrī 文殊師力菩薩; 3) Samantabhadra 普賢菩薩; 4) Mahāsthāmaprāpta 大勢至菩薩; 5) Ākāśagarbha 虛空藏菩薩; 6) Vajrahetu 金剛手菩薩; 7) Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin 除蓋障菩薩; 8) Kṣitigarbha 地藏王菩薩. The Bodhisattva King of the Heavenly Storehouse 天藏王菩薩, the Bodhisattva who Upholds the Earth 持地菩薩, the Bodhisattva King of Great Sovereign Authority 大威德自在王菩薩, and the Bodhisattva King of Guiding [Souls] 引路王菩薩 are summoned elsewhere in the manual.

3) The Ten *Vidyārajas* 十大明王

4) The Sixteen Arhats 十六羅漢 and the Five Hundred Arhats 五百羅漢

5) The disciples of the Buddha 尊者

6) The eight classes of *devas* and dragons 天龍八部 and other dharma-protecting benevolent spirits 護法善神.

LIST OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC ABBREVIATIONS

- BGSB** *Beopgye seongbeom suryuk seunghoe sujae uigwe*. Attributed to Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275). 1 fascicle. 1573 reprint of 1470 original. In HG, vol. 1, 573-620.
- CGSL** *Chongguang shuilu fashi wuzhe dazhai yiwen* 重廣水陸法施無遮大齋儀文. 6 booklets extant. 1379. Yunnan Provincial Library 雲南省圖書館, Kunming 昆明, Yunnan Province, China.
- CT** *Concordance du Tao-Tsang: titres des ouvrages*. By K. M. Schipper et al. Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1975.
- DHBW** *Dunhuang bianwen ji xinshu* 敦煌變文集新書. Edited by Pan Chonggui 潘重規. Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1994.
- DHMGK** *Dunhuang Mogao ku* 敦煌莫高窟. Edited by Dunhuang wenwu yanjiu suo 敦煌文物研究所. 5 volumes. Zhongguo shiku 中國石窟 series. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982.
- FJSF** *Fajie shengfan shuilu shenghui xiuzhai yigui* 法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌. By Zhipan 志磐 (ca. 1220-1275). Revised by Zhuhong 祿宏 (1535-1615). 6 fascicles. In X74, no. 1479.
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FIGURES

Introduction



Figure 0.1

Exterior.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 0.2

Interior.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibei si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 0.3

Triad of the Great Lord Lao 太上老君, the Buddha Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼, and Confucius 孔子; and the Jade Emperor 玉皇; carved and polychromed sandstone; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 0.4

Tableaux of a heavenly ascent and a descent to Purgatory; carved and polychromed sandstone;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 0.5

Tableau of a heavenly ascent, including a meditative journey by sword at right; carved and polychromed sandstone; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.
Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 0.6

Detail of ritualist.

Tableau of a heavenly ascent; carved and polychromed sandstone; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 0.7

Tableau of two of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed sandstone;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 0.8

Detail of one of the Kings of Purgatory.

Tableau of two of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed sandstone;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 0.9

Detail of a demonic lackey and a tortured soul.

Tableau of two of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed sandstone;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210.

Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 0.10

Detail of cloud-forms surrounding the halo of the Buddha Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼 at center. Triad of the Great Lord Lao 太上老君, the Buddha Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼, and Confucius 孔子; carved and polychromed sandstone; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1210. Hall of the Three Teachings 三教堂, Shibi si 石壁寺, Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Part 1



Figure 1.1

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Water-Land Retreat* 水陸齋, seventeenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.1 cm x 52.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

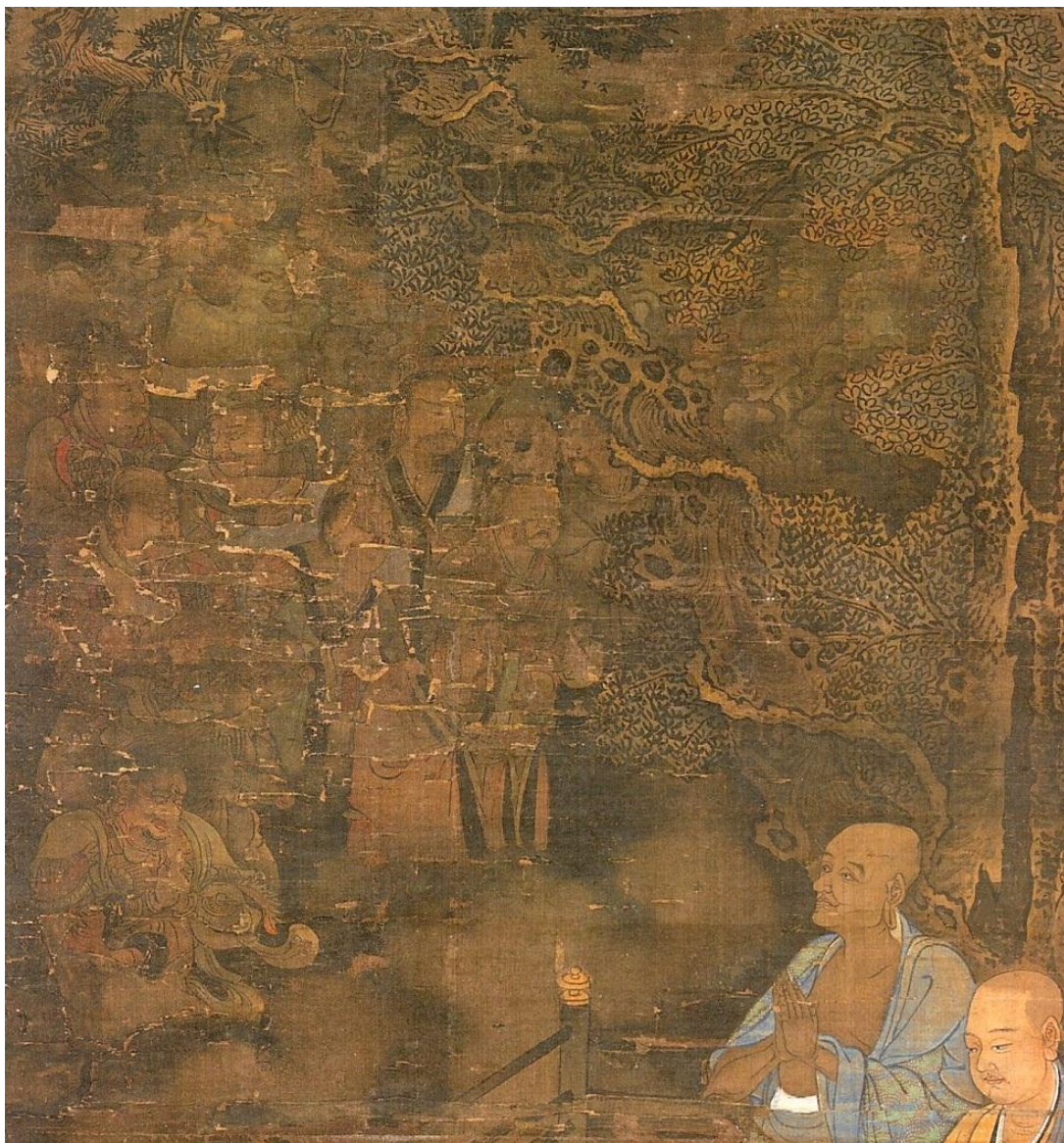


Figure 1.2

Detail of ghosts.

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Water-Land Retreat* 水陸齋, seventeenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.1 cm x 52.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.3

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Bestowal [of Food] to Hungry Ghosts* 施餓鬼, seventy-second of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.8 cm x 51.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

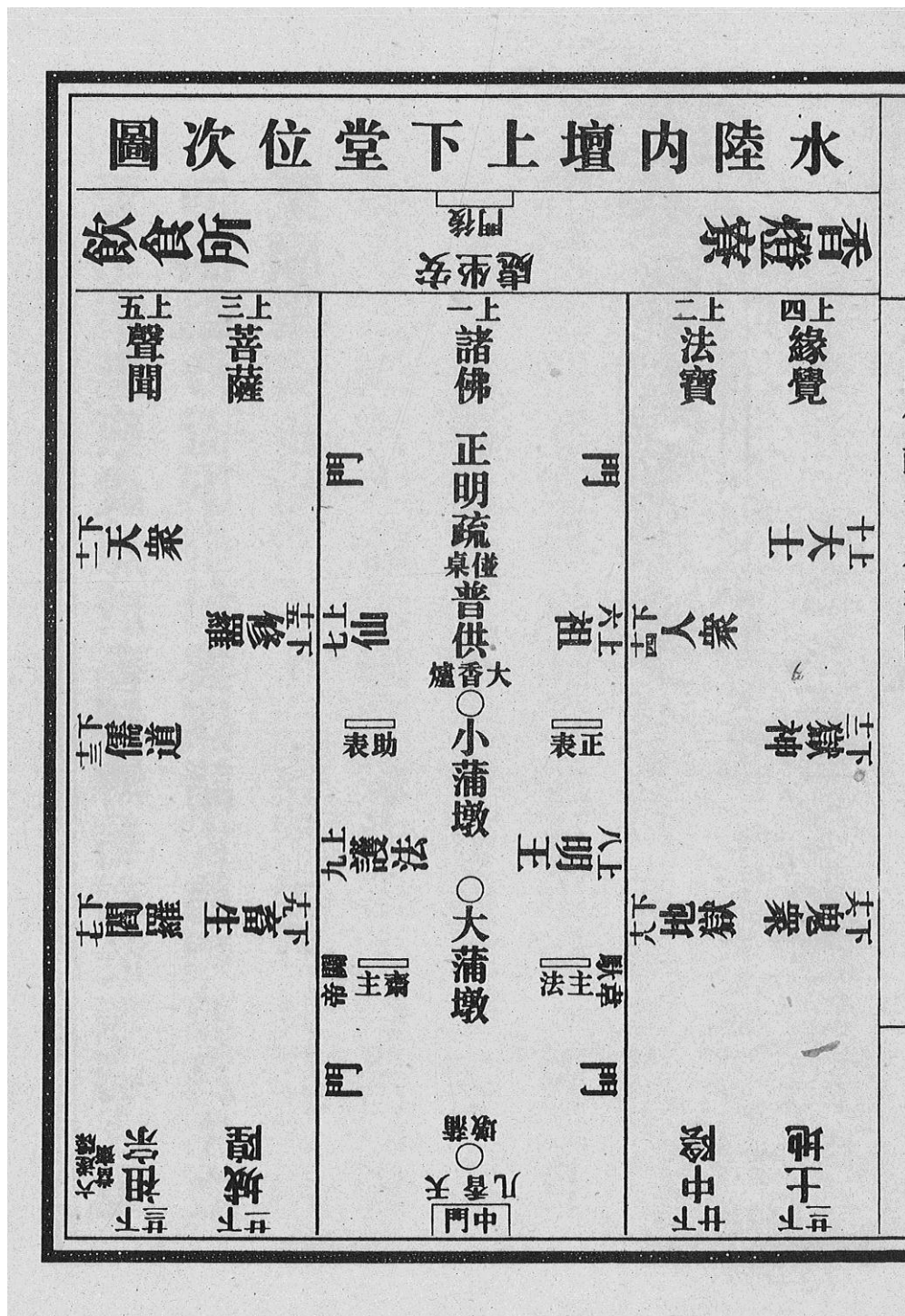


Figure 1.4

Diagram of the Inner Altar 內壇 for the performance of the Water-Land Retreat according to the *Shuilu yigui huiben* 水陸儀軌會本.

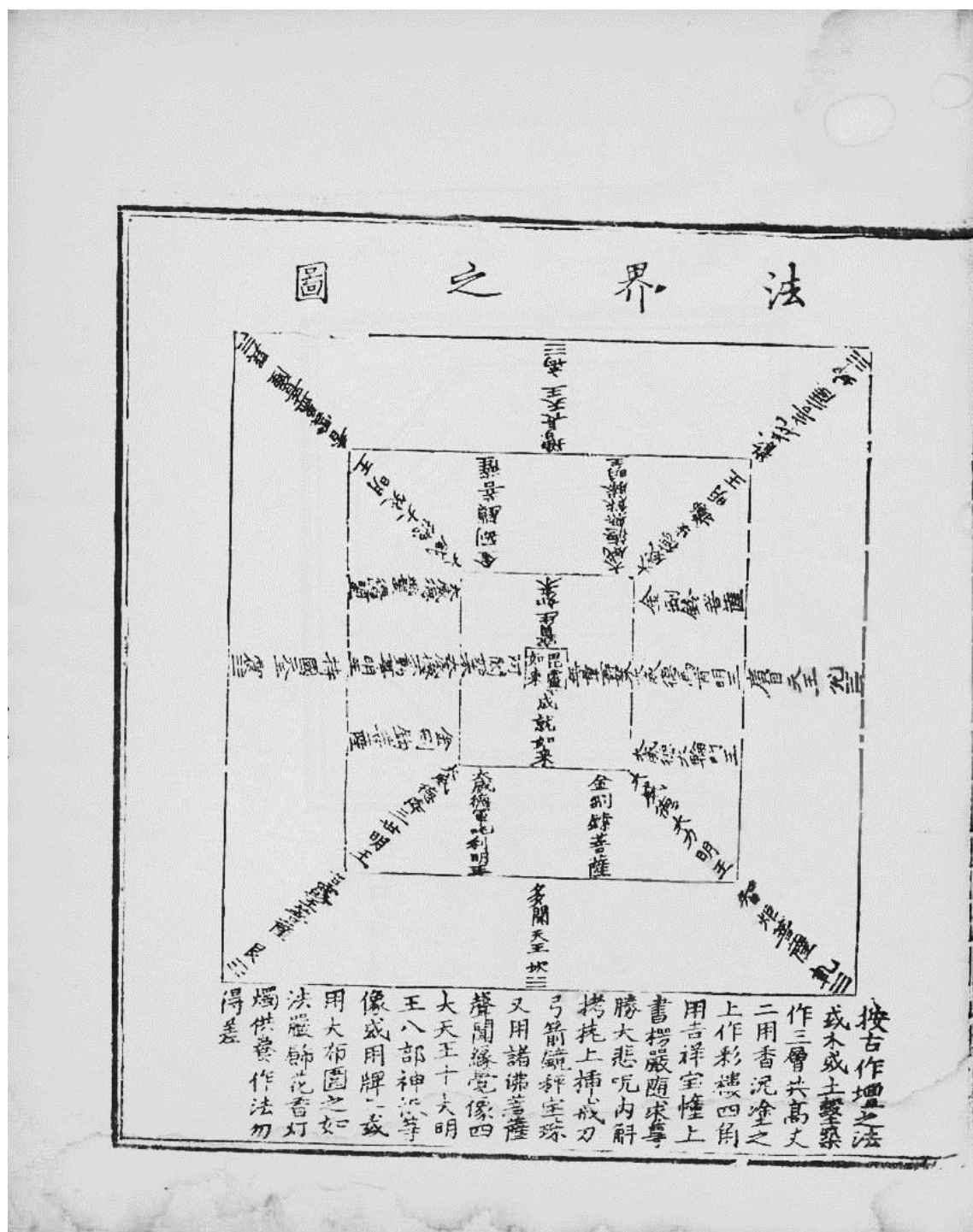


Figure 1.5

Diagram of the [Altar of the] Dharmadhātu 法界之圖.

Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen 天地冥陽水陸儀文; woodblock-printed ink on paper; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1520-1620.

© The East Asian Library and the Gest Collection, Princeton University.



Figure 1.6

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Arhat Offering Ritual* 羅漢供, first of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.7

Detail of offerings and icons.

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Arhat Offering Ritual* 羅漢供, first of one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.5 cm; Southern

Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.8

Twenty Devas 二十天圖, first pair in a set of four hanging scrolls; ink and colors on silk; 120.0 cm x 55.5 cm each; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, late 13th century.



Figure 1.9

Twenty Devas 二十天圖, second pair in a set of four hanging scrolls; ink and colors on silk; 120.0 cm x 55.5 cm each; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, late 13th century.



Figure 1.10

Eighteen Arhats 十八羅漢圖; ink and colors on silk; 118.2 cm x 54.9 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Collection of the Nara National Museum 奈良国立博物館, Nara, Japan.



Figure 1.11

Arhats 羅漢圖; ink and colors on silk; 106.3 cm x 49.7 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, 13th century.
Private Collection.



Figure 1.12

Arhats 羅漢圖; ink and colors on silk; 108.9 x 52.1; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, 13th century.

Collection of Sennyū-ji 泉涌寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.13

The Sixteen Lohans 十六羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 81.8 cm x 37 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6144.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.



Figure 1.14

Brahma 大梵天王.

Shuilu daochang guishen tu 水陸道場鬼神圖; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 24 cm x 15 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1465-1487.

Collection of the National Library of China 中國國家圖書館, Beijing, China.



Figure 1.15

Devas 天道, one of the *Six Paths* 六道繪; ink and colors on silk; 104.7 cm x 47.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Shin Chion-in 新知恩院, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.16

Humans 人道, one of the *Six Paths* 六道繪; ink and colors on silk; 104.7 cm x 47.0 cm;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Shin Chion-in 新智恩院, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.17

Animals 畜生道, one of the *Six Paths* 六道繪; ink and colors on silk; 104.7 cm x 47.0 cm;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Shin Chion-in 新知恩院, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.18

Asuras 阿修羅道, one of the *Six Paths* 六道繪; ink and colors on silk; 104.7 cm x 47.0 cm;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Shin Chion-in 新知恩院, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.19

Hungry Ghosts 餓鬼道, one of the *Six Paths* 六道繪; ink and colors on silk; 104.7 cm x 47.0 cm;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Shin Chion-in 新知恩院, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.20

Hell-Dwellers 地獄道, one of the *Six Paths* 六道繪; ink and colors on silk; 104.7 cm x 47.0 cm;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Shin Chion-in 新知恩院, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.21

Officials of the Past (?); ink and colors on silk; 103.5 cm x 45.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Collection of Ruisen-ji 瑞泉寺, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 1.22

Celestial and Terrestrial Deities (?); ink and colors on silk; 103.5 cm x 45.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Collection of Ruisen-ji 瑞泉寺, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

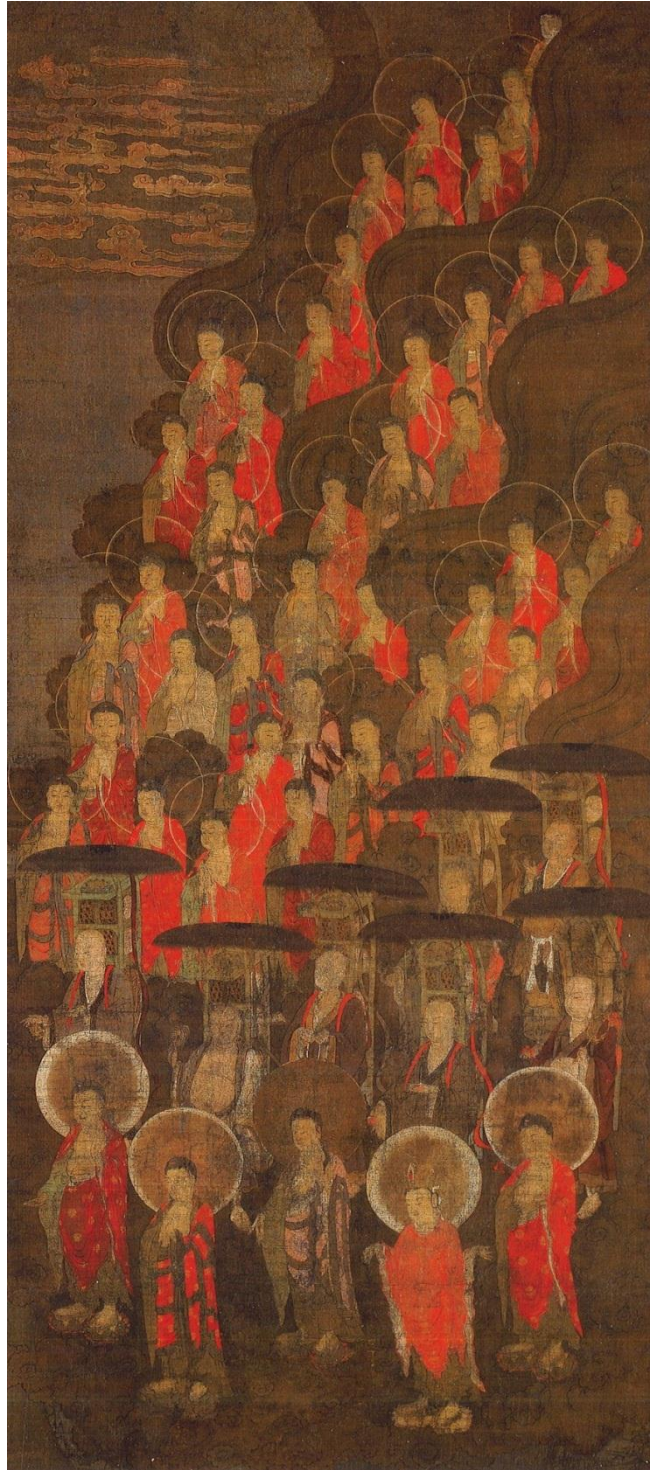


Figure 1.23

Myriad Deities Descending 諸尊降臨圖; ink and colors on silk; 131.0 cm x 58.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Private Collection.



Figure 1.24

Pratyekabuddhas Assembling (?); ink and colors on silk; 118.5 cm x 59.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Collection of Chion-in 知恩院, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.25

Arhats Assembling (?); ink and colors on silk; 118.5 cm x 59.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Collection of Chion-in 知恩院, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.26

Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 120.2 cm x 52.6 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of Hirokawa-dera 弘川寺, Osaka, Japan.



Figure 1.27

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001. Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.28

Detail of canopy.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001. Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.29

Right wall.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.

Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.30

Left wall.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001. Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.31

Detail of King Guang of Qin 秦廣王, first of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王.
 Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and
 polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960)
 or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.
 Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality,
 China.



Figure 1.32

Detail of the King of the Five Offices 五官王, fourth of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王.
 Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and
 polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960)
 or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001.
 Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality,
 China.



Figure 1.33

Detail of infernal messenger.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001. Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.34

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Lohan Manifesting Himself as an Eleven-Headed Guanyin* 應身觀音, one of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 06.289.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.



Figure 1.35

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Promoting the Five Hundred Arhats* 勸進五百羅漢, second of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.7 cm x 52.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.36

Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Dharma Assembly* 法會 (or *Visit to the Palace* 宮殿への訪問), twenty-fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.

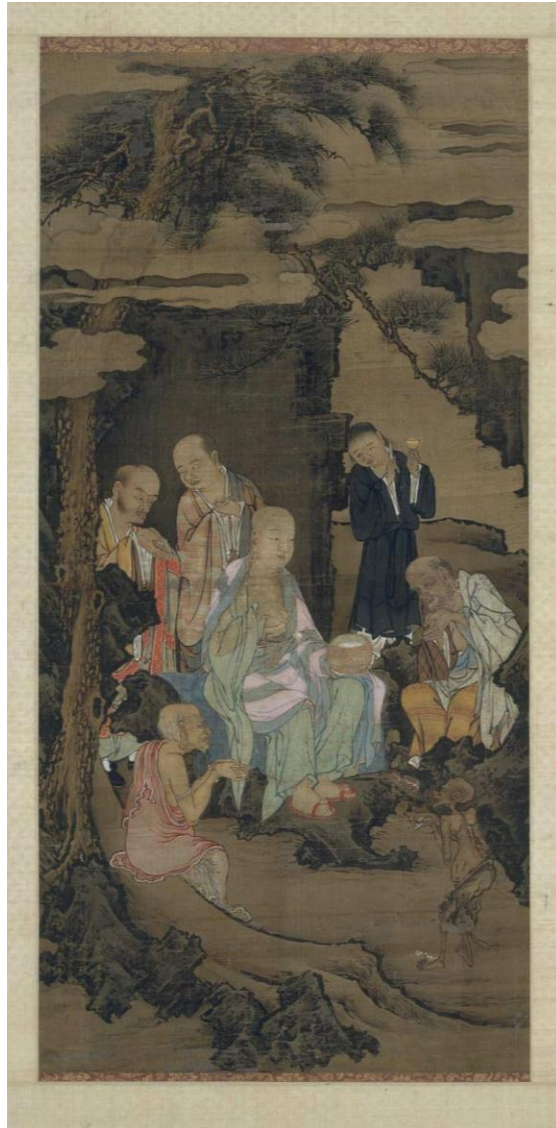


Figure 1.37

Lin Tinggui 林庭珪, *Lohans Feeding a Hungry Spirit* 施飯餓鬼, one of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.4 cm x 53.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 06.292.

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Figure 1.38

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Flight to Hell* 地獄への飛来, seventy-third of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.1 cm x 51.6 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.39

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Release of Living Beings* 放生, forty-fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.1 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.40

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Sutra Lecture or Copying* 講經 or 寫經, thirty-seventh of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.9 cm x 52 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.41

Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Offerings to an Icon of Amitābha* 阿弥陀画像供养, thirty-fifth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 112.8 cm x 52.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1179.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.42

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Worship of an Icon of Avalokiteśvara* 觀音画像の礼拝, thirty-sixth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 107.6 cm x 52.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.



Figure 1.43

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Offerings for an Elite Woman* 貴女の供養, eighteenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.4 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.44

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Ascending the Hall* 上堂, sixteenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.4 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.45

Lin Tinggui 林庭珪, *Shaving* 剃髮, forty-ninth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 113.2 cm x 52.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1180.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.46

Zhou Jichang 周季常, *The Rock Bridge at Mount Tiantai* 天台石橋, one of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.9 cm x 52.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178.

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Gift of Charles Lang Freer F1907.139.



Figure 1.47

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Supernatural Powers* 怪力, sixty-third of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 109.0 cm x 51.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.48

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *The Monk from Tang [Xuanzang] Collects Sutras* 唐僧取經, seventy-seventh of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.3 cm x 52.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188. Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.49

Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Offerings from an Earth God* 地神の供養, tenth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 112.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 1.50

Confucius and his ten disciples 文宣王十哲; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 1.94 m x 3.25 m x 1.48 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1088.

Niche 6, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.51

The Buddhas Vairocana 毘盧遮那佛, Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼佛, and Maitreya 彌勒佛; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 1.47 m x 6.36 m x 1.38 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1082.

Niche 7, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.52

Detail of Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那佛.

The Buddhas Vairocana 毘盧遮那佛, Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼佛, and Maitreya 彌勒佛; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 1.47 m x 6.36 m x 1.38 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1082.

Niche 7, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.53

Fohui Monastery Pagoda 佛惠寺塔; carved red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127),
ca. 1082-1096.

Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazhu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality,
China.



Figure 1.54

Detail of half-open door.

Fohui Monastery Pagoda 佛惠寺塔; carved red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127),
ca. 1082-1096.

Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality,
China.



Figure 1.55

Fohui Monastery 佛惠寺; Qing dynasty (1644-1911), 1901.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazhu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality,
China.



Figure 1.56

Avalokiteśvara 觀音, Yan Xun 嚴遜, and wife; carved and polychromed red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.

Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.57

Detail of Yan Xun 嚴遜.

Avalokiteśvara 觀音, Yan Xun 嚴遜, and wife; carved and polychromed red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.

Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.58

Stele; carved sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1090.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 1.59

Laojun 老君 and immortals; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.70 m x 3.43 m x 1.92 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1083.

Niche 8, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.60

Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 地藏十王; carved and polychromed red sandstone;
niche: 1.80 m x 5.50 m x 1.54 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1096.
Niche 9, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 1.61

Tejaprabhā and the Eleven Luminaries 熾盛光佛十一活躍; carved and polychromed sandstone;
Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Rongchang County 榮昌縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 1.62

Vajrapāṇi 金剛力士; carved and polychromed red sandstone; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1082.

Exterior of Niche 7, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.63

Mañjuśrī 文殊 and Samantabhadra 普賢; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.46 m x 1.49 m x 1.83 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1090.

Niche 5, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.64

Hārītī 訶利帝母; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.10 m x 2.53 m x 1.10 m;
Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.

Niche 1, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing
Municipality, China.



Figure 1.65

Earth God 土地; carved and polychromed red sandstone; niche: 1.55 m x 1.65 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.

Niche 3, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.66

The Medicine King Sun Simiao 藥王孫真人; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.06 m x .90 m; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 1082-1096.
Niche 4, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 1.67

The monk Baozhi 寶誌 and an attendant, carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.34 m x 2.54 m x 1.72 m (1.64 m above ground level); Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1085.

Niche 2, Shizhuan shan 石篆山 (Stone Seal Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Part 2



Figure 2.1

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.2

Vairocana Buddha 毘盧遮那佛.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.3

Śākyamuni Buddha 釋迦牟尼佛.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.4

Cloud-borne immortal.

Audience with the Origin 朝元圖; ink and colors on plaster; ca. 1247-1262.

East wall, Sanqing dian 三清殿 (Hall of the Three Purities), Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy), Ruicheng 芮城, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.5

Three Bodies of the Buddha 三身佛.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Qing dynasty (1644-1911), 1659.

East wall, Pilu dian 毘盧殿 (Vairocana Hall), Guangsheng shang si 廣勝上寺 (Upper Monastery of Vast Excellence), Hongdong County 洪洞縣, Shanxi Province, China.

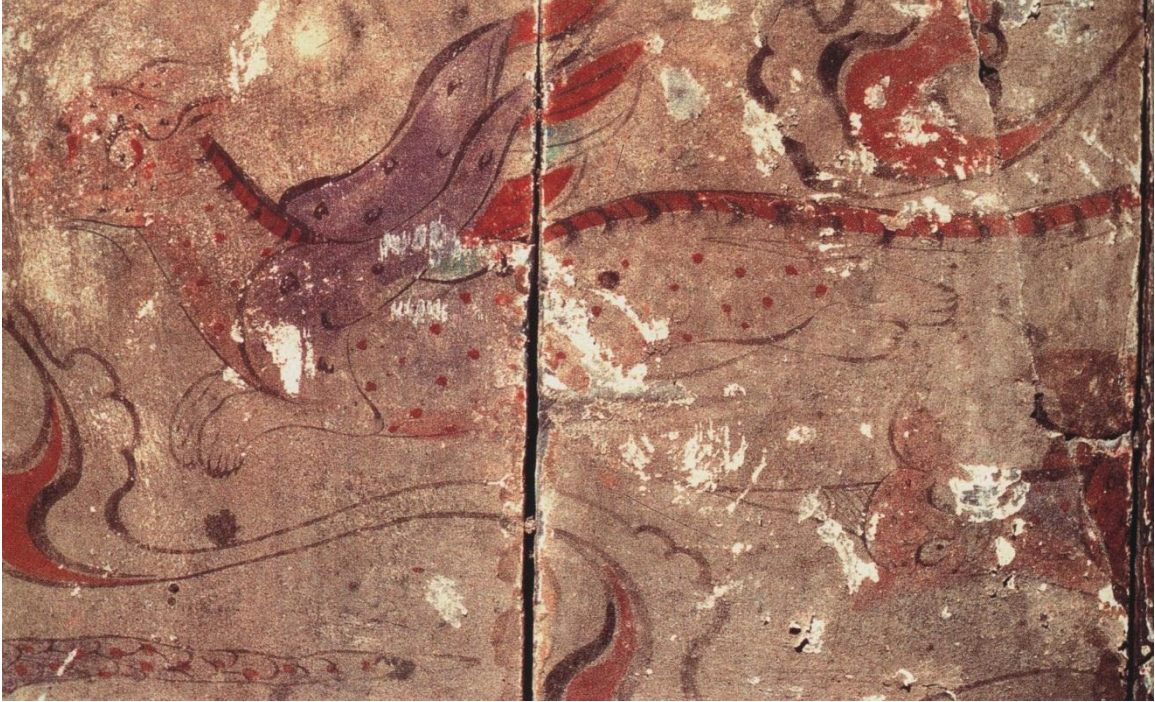


Figure 2.6

Mythical beast with bands of *qi* at lower left; painted brick; Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), 1st century BCE.

Tomb of Bo Qianqiu 卜千秋, Shaogou cun 燒沟村, Luoyang 洛陽, Henan Province, China.
Now in the collection of the Luoyang Museum of Ancient Tombs 洛陽古墓博物館, Luoyang, Henan Province, China.



Figure 2.7

Flat dish; lacquered wood; d.: 57.8 cm, h.: 4 cm; Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), 2nd century BCE.

Excavated from Tomb No. 3, Mawangdui 馬王堆, Changsha 長沙, Hunan Province, China. Excavated between 1972 and 1974. Now in the collection of the Hunan Provincial Museum 湖南省博物館, Changsha, Hunan Province, China.



Figure 2.8

Maitreya 彌勒菩薩.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.9

Bodhisattvas 菩薩.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.10

Brahma and His Saintly Entourage 梵天聖眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.11

Indra and His Saintly Entourage 帝釋聖眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.12
Monk.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.13

The Prince of the Sun Palace and His Entourage 日宮天子眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.14

The Prince of the Moon Palace and His Entourage 月宮天子眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.15

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; late Ming (1368-1644) or early Qing (1644-1911) dynasty, ca. 17th century.

South wall, Chuanfa zhengzong dian 傳法正宗殿 (Hall of the Transmission of the Dharma of the Orthodox School), Yong'an si 永安寺 (Monastery of Eternal Peace), Hunyuan County 渾源縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.16

Spirits of the Twelve Primes 十二元神眾.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.17

Dharma-Protecting Benevolent Spirits 護法善神.

Assembled Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; ink and colors on plaster; Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), ca. 1289.

West wall, Yao dian 腰殿 (Middle Hall), Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery), Jishan County 稷山縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.18

Kṣitigarbha 地藏菩薩; ink and colors on silk; 124 cm x 62 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.19

Taiyi and His Entourage of Myriad Spirits 太乙諸神眾; ink and colors on silk; 116 cm x 61 cm;
Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi
Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館,
Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.20

The Arhats Pinḍolabbaradvāja 跋羅墮尊 and Kanakavatsa 伽伐蹉尊; ink and colors on silk; 119 cm x 61.5 cm; Ming (1368-1644) dynasty, early 16th century.
 Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.21

City Gods of All Municipalities and Earth Gods of All Districts 諸郡城隍諸司土地之神; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 214 cm x 103 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1600.
Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 734).



Figure 2.22

The Star-Lords of Good Fortune, Emolument, and Longevity 福祿壽星君眾; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 78 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454. Musée national des art asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 734).



Figure 2.23

Buddhas of the Five Directions 五方如來.

Shuilu daochang guishen tu 水陸道場鬼神圖; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 24 cm x 15 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1465-1487.

Collection of the National Library of China 中國國家圖書館, Beijing, China.



水陆殿北壁浮雕之一



水陆殿北壁浮雕之二



水陆殿北壁浮雕之三



水陆殿北壁浮雕之四



水陆殿北壁浮雕之五



水陆殿北壁浮雕之六

Figure 2.24

Deities of the Water-Land Retreat; carved sandstone; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 16th century.
Cave 5, Baoyan si 寶巖寺 (Treasure Cliff Monastery), also known as Jindeng si 金燈寺 (Golden
Lamp Monastery), Pingshun County 平順縣, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.25

Assembly of Rocana 盧舍那佛 (or Vairocana 毗盧遮那佛), Mañjuśrī 文殊, and Samantabhadra 普賢; stone relief; 146 cm x 150 cm; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), 1022.

Feilai feng 飛來峰, Hangzhou 杭州, Zhejiang Province, China.



Figure 2.26

Mañjuśrī 文殊 and Samantabhadra 普賢; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 57 cm x 29 cm each; Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), ca. 985.

Seiryō-ji 清涼寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 2.27

Frontispiece.

Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen 天地冥陽水陸齋儀文; woodblock-printed ink on paper; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1520-1620.

© The East Asian Library and the Gest Collection, Princeton University.

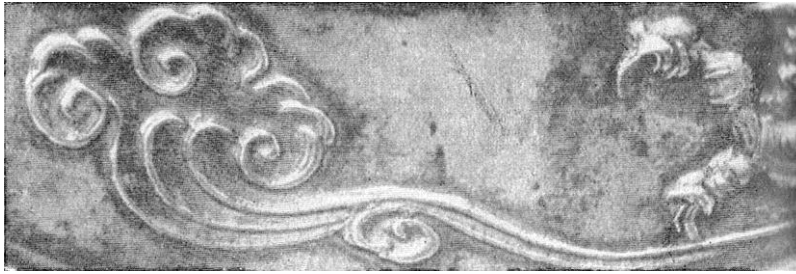


Figure 2.28

Tang-dynasty (618-907) "treasure-cloud pattern 寶雲文."

Source: Kosgui Kazuo 小杉一雄, "Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について," *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): n. p., fig. 1, A.

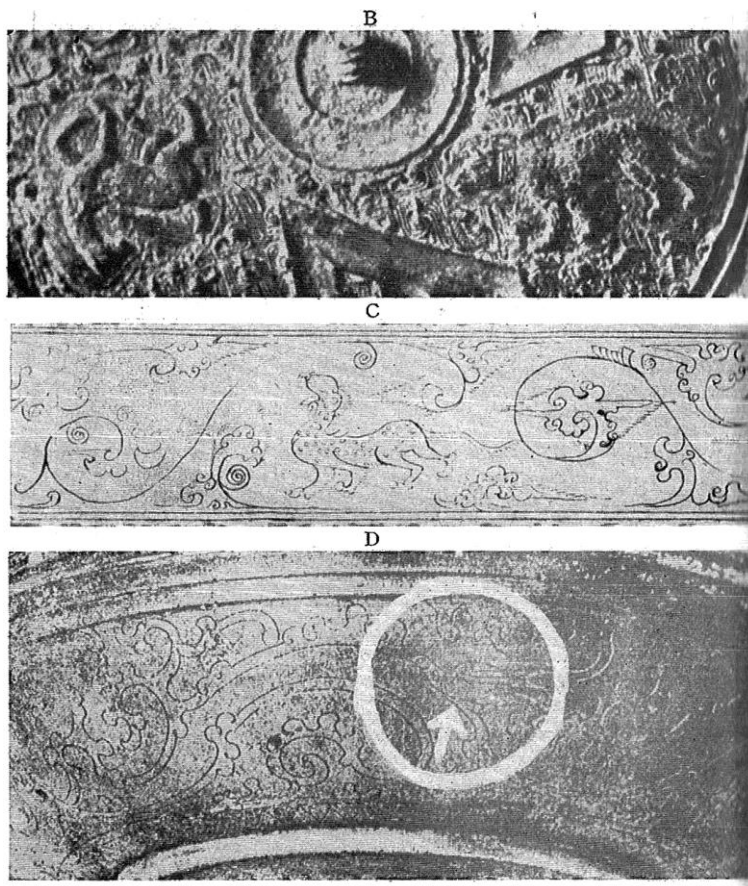


Figure 2.29

Early cloud patterns.

Source: Kosgui Kazuo 小杉一雄, "Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について," *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): n. p., fig. 1, B-D.



Figure 2.30

Figure mounted on vegetal clouds.

Source: Kosgui Kazuo 小杉一雄, "Hōun monyō ni tsuite 寶雲文様について," *Shikan* 史観 43 (1955): n. p., fig. 2, C.



Figure 2.31

Detail of bands of *qi* and mythical creatures.

Second of four coffins; lacquer on wood; Western Han dynasty (206 BCE-9 CE), ca. 168 BCE. Excavated from Tomb No. 1 (the Tomb of Lady Dai 軟侯夫人), Mawangdui 馬王堆, Changsha 長沙, Hunan Province, China. Excavated in 1972. Now in the collection of the Hunan Provincial Museum 湖南省博物館, Changsha, Hunan Province, China.



Figure 2.32

White Tiger 白虎, Red Bird 朱雀, and crucible; ink rubbing of stone sarcophagus; Eastern Han dynasty (25-220).

Sarcophagus No. 4, Luzhou 瀘州, Sichuan Province, China. Excavated in 1974. Now in the collection of the Luzhou City Museum 瀘州市博物館, Luzhou, Sichuan Province, China.



Figure 2.33

Queen Mother of the West 西王母; ink and colors on plaster; Xin dynasty (9-23).
Tomb excavated in 1991 near Xin cun 辛村, Gaolong xiang 高龍鄉, Yanshi City 偃師市, Henan
Province, China.



Figure 2.34

Astral deities and constellations; ink and colors on plaster; Xin dynasty (9-23).
Tomb excavated in 2009 near Er cun 二村, Yangqiaopan 楊橋畔, Jingbian County 靖邊縣,
Shaanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.35

Cloud chariot; ink and colors on brick; Eastern Han dynasty (25-220).
Tomb excavated in 2005 near Yangyi cun 楊一村, Yangqiaopan 楊橋畔, Jingbian County 靖邊
縣, Shaanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.36

Apsarases 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Northern Liang dynasty (397-439).
Upper register, north wall, Cave 272, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.37

Apsarases 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Northern Wei dynasty (386-535).
Front ceiling slope, Cave 248, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.38

Celestial deities; ink and colors on plaster; Western Wei dynasty (535-557).
Ceiling, Cave 285, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.39

Apsarases 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Western Wei dynasty (535-557).
Upper register, south wall, Cave 285, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.40

The nocturnal escape of the Buddha from his palace; ink and colors on plaster; Sui dynasty (589-618).

West wall, Cave 278, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.41

Apsarases 飛天; ink and colors on plaster; Sui dynasty (589-618).

Niche ceiling, north wall, Cave 401, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.42

Western Pure Land tableau; carved stone; Northern Qi dynasty (550-577).

Cave 2, Xiangtang shan 響堂山, Hebei Province, China.

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase F1921.2.



Figure 2.43

Mountain-shaped incense censer (*boshanlu* 博山爐); bronze inlaid with gold; h. 26cm; Western Han (206 BCE-9 CE) dynasty, ca. 113 BCE.
Tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝, Mancheng County 滿城縣, Hebei Province, China. Excavated in 1968.
Now in the collection of the Hebei Provincial Museum 河北省博物館, Shijiazhuang 石家莊, Hebei Province, China.



Figure 2.44

Lotus Sutra tableau 法華經變; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
Cave 23, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.45

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.

East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.46

“The Parable of the Medicinal Herbs 藥草喻品.”

Lotus Sutra tableau 法華經變; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
North wall, Cave 23, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.47

Bodhisattvas from the Land of Sumeru Shape 須彌相國.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.

East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.48

Assemblies of bodhisattvas accompanying the Buddha Fragrance Accumulated 香積佛.
Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.

East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.49

Bodhisattvas from the Land of Many Fragrances 眾香國.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.

East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.50

Land of Wonderful Joy 妙喜國.

Vimalakīrti Sutra tableau 維摩詰所說經變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712), ca. 686.

East wall, Cave 335, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

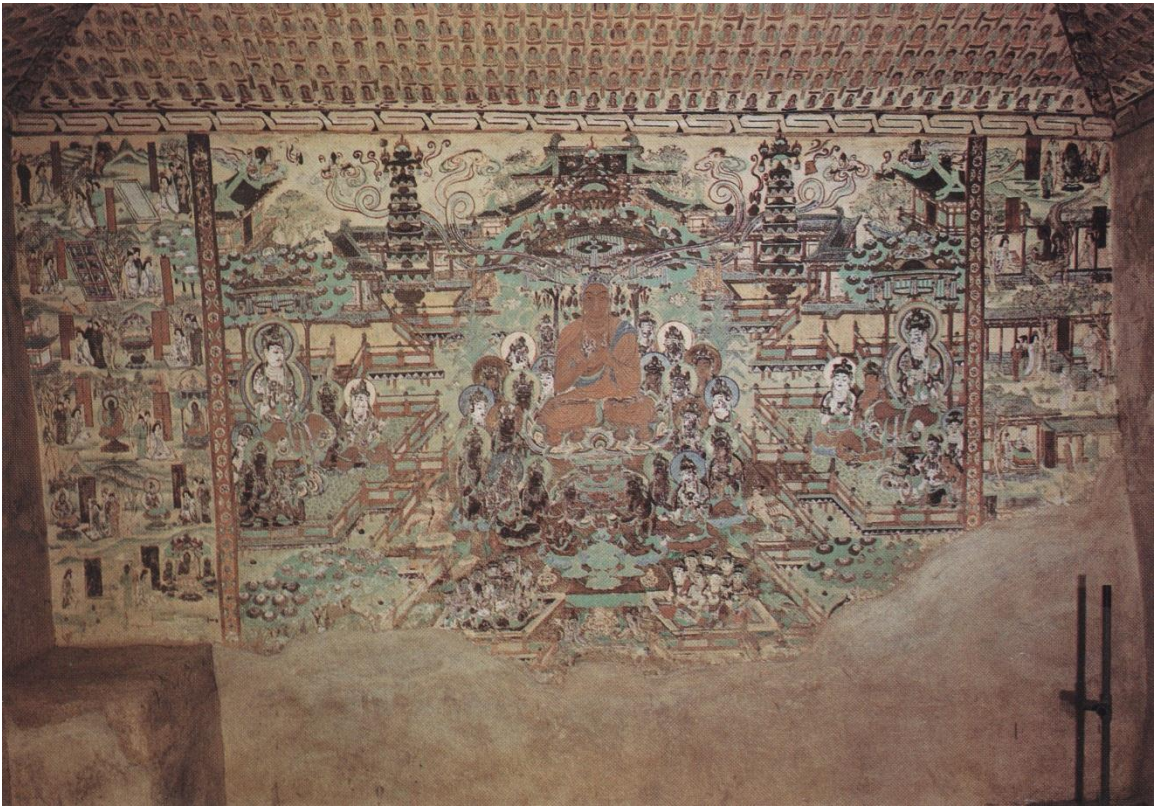


Figure 2.51

Western Pure Land tableau 西方極樂淨土變; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).

North wall, Cave 45, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.52

Eastern Pure Land tableau 東方淨土變; ink and colors on plaster; Early Tang period (618-712).
North wall, Cave 220, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.53

Mañjuśrī 文殊 and assembly; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
North ceiling slope, Cave 31, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.54

Jōchō 定朝 (d. 1057), mandorla for a seated sculpture of Amitābha Buddha; lacquered and gilded wood; Heian period (794-1185), 1053.
Byōdō-in 平等院, Uji 宇治, Japan.



Figure 2.55

Detail.

Jōchō 定朝 (d. 1057), mandorla for a seated sculpture of Amitābha Buddha; lacquered and gilded wood; Heian period (794-1185), 1053.

Byōdō-in 平等院, Uji 宇治, Japan.



Figure 2.56

Mandorla for a standing sculpture of Śākyamuni Buddha; Japanese cherry; Heian period (794-1185), late 11th century (?).
Seiryō-ji 清涼寺, Kyoto, Japan.

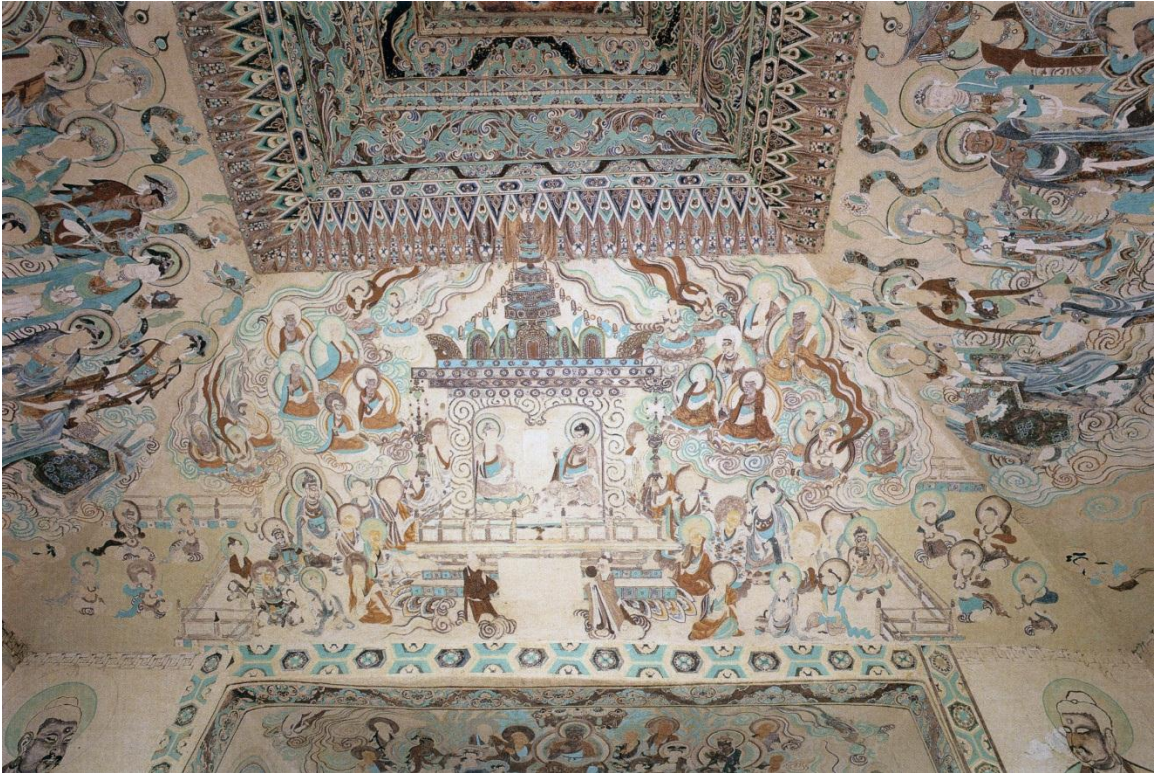


Figure 2.57

Preaching Assembly; ink and colors on plaster; High Tang period (712-781).
West ceiling slope, Cave 31, Mogao Grottoes 莫高窟, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China.

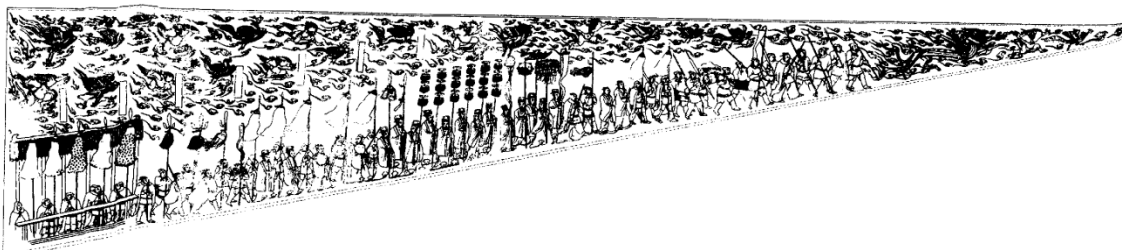


Figure 2.58

East wall, tomb passageway, Wanzhang 灣漳 Tomb; Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), 560.
Wanzhang cun 灣漳村, Ci County 磁縣, Hebei Province, China. Excavated in 1989.



Figure 2.59

Green Dragon 青龍; ink and colors on plaster; l. ca. 450 cm; Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), 560.
East wall, tomb passageway, Wanzhang 灣漳 Tomb, Wanzhang cun 灣漳村, Ci County 磁縣,
Hebei Province, China. Excavated in 1989. Now in the collection of the Hebei Provincial
Institute of Cultural Relics 河北省文物研究所.

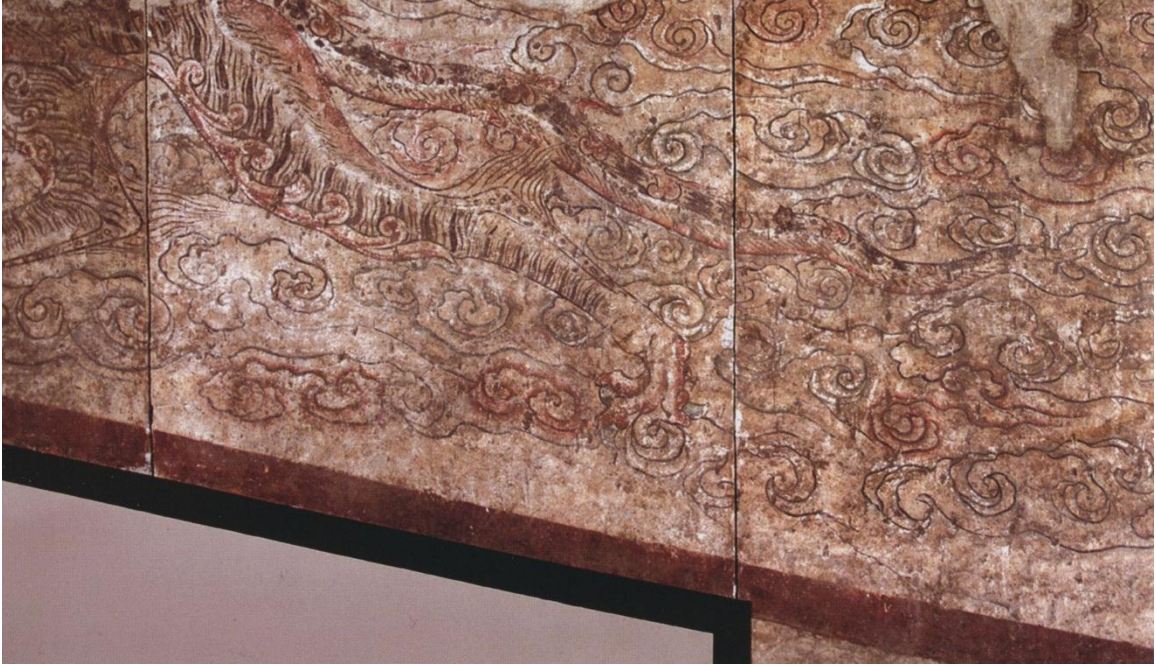


Figure 2.60

White Tiger 白虎; ink and colors on plaster; 196 cm x 682 cm; Tang dynasty (618-907), 706.
West wall, tomb passageway, Tomb of Prince Yide 懿德太子墓, Qianling 乾陵, Qian County 乾
縣, Shaanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shaanxi History Museum 陝西歷史
博物館.



Figure 2.61

Mañjuśrī 文殊 and assembly; ink and colors on plaster; Five Dynasties (907-960).
North wall, Cave 35, Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, Anxi 安西, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.62

Detail of clouds.

Mañjuśrī 文殊 and assembly; ink and colors on plaster; Five Dynasties (907-960).
North wall, Cave 35, Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, Anxi 安西, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.63

The Eight Classes of *Devas* and Dragons 天龍八部; ink and colors on plaster; Five Dynasties (907-960).

North wall, antechamber, Cave 16, Yulin Grottoes 榆林窟, Anxi 安西, Gansu Province, China.



Figure 2.64

Vaiśravaṇa Crossing the Sea 天王渡海; ink and colors on silk; 61.8 cm x 57.4 cm (painted area);
Five Dynasties (907-960).

Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the
collection of the British Museum, London, UK (1919,0101,0.45; Ch. 0018).

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Figure 2.65

Soul-Guiding Bodhisattva 引路菩薩; ink and colors on silk; 80.5 cm x 53.8 cm; Late Tang period (848-907).

Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the British Museum, London, UK (1919,0101,0.47; Ch.lvii.002).

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Figure 2.66

Thaumaturge 聖僧; ink and colors on paper; Late Tang 晚唐 period (848-907) or Five Dynasties (907-960).

Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (MG 17683).



Figure 2.67

Avalokitesvara (Guanyin Pusa) Attended by Two Donors; ink and colors on silk; 95.3 cm x 61.8 cm; Late Tang period (848-907).

Reportedly recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Second Fogg Expedition to China Fund, 1925.12.

Photograph: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.



Figure 2.68

Mañjuśrī 文殊; woodblock-printed ink on paper; 31.5 cm x 20.4 cm; Five Dynasties (907-960). Recovered from Mogao 莫高 Cave 17, Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu Province, China. Now in the collection of the British Library, London, UK (Or.8210/P.20).

© British Library Board.



Figure 2.69

Song-dynasty (960-1279) base of a Tang-dynasty (618-907) *dhāraṇī* pillar.
Baosheng si 保勝寺, Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu Province 江蘇省, China.



Figure 2.70

Vaiśravaṇa 北方天王; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.95 m x 2.74 m x 1.45 m, figure: 2.50 m x .83m; Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 895.

Niche 5, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 2.71

Thousand-Armed Guanyin 千手觀音; carved and polychromed yellow sandstone; niche: 2.90 m x 2.70 m x 1.42 m; Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 892-895.
Niche 9, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 2.72

Jin Dashou 金大受 (act. mid 12th century), second of *Sixteen Arhats* 十六羅漢圖; ink and colors on silk, 111.6 cm x 50.2 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 12th century. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum 東京国立博物館, Tokyo, Japan.



Figure 2.73

Rakan 羅漢; ink and colors on silk; 101.5 cm x 40.3 cm; Muromachi period (1338-1573), ca. 15th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fenollosa-Weld Collection, 11.4085.

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Figure 2.74

Detail of clouds.

Rakan 羅漢; ink and colors on silk; 101.5 cm x 40.3 cm; Muromachi period (1338-1573), ca. 15th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Fenollosa-Weld Collection, 11.4085.

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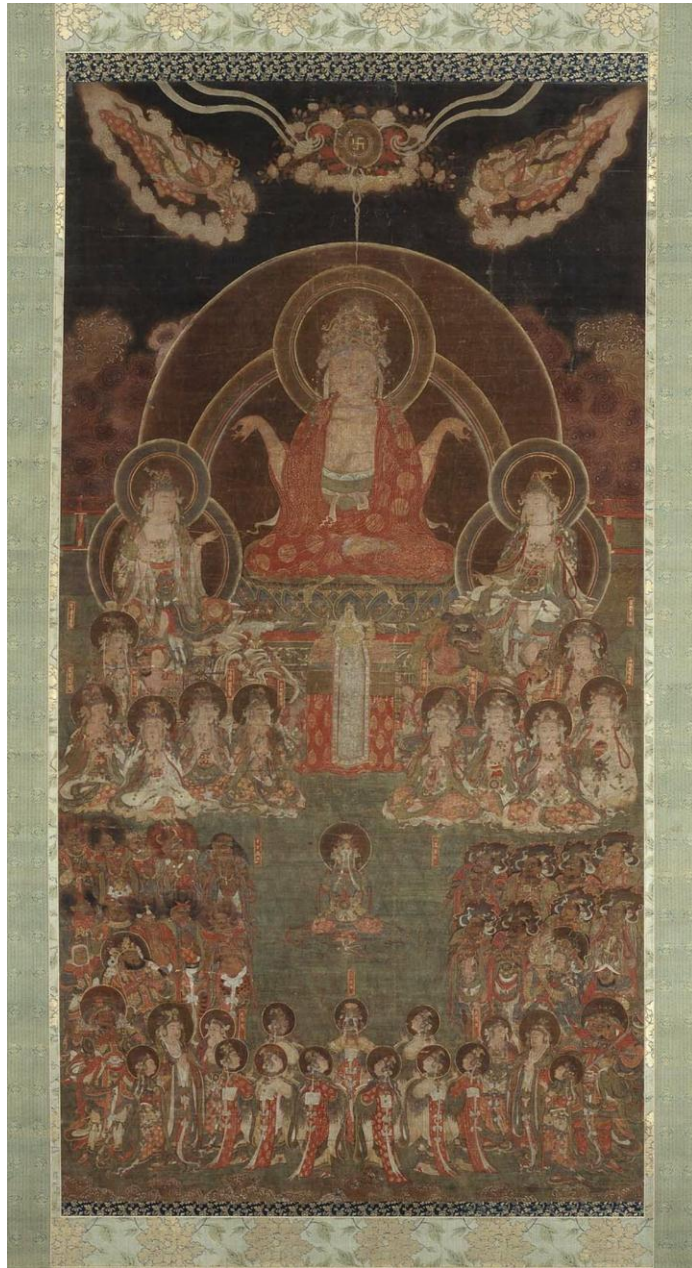


Figure 2.75

Perfect Enlightenment Sutra Illumination 圓覺經變相圖; ink and colors on silk; 165.5 cm x 85.5 cm; Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), late 13th to early 14th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6142.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.



Figure 2.76

Detail of clouds.

Perfect Enlightenment Sutra Illumination 圓覺經變相圖; ink and colors on silk; 165.5 cm x 85.5 cm; Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), late 13th to early 14th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6142.

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Figure 2.77

Detail of “The Senior Arbiter of Fate 大司命.”

The Nine Songs of Qu Yuan 九歌圖書畫卷; ink and colors on silk; 24.7 cm x 608.5 cm; attrib. Southern Song (1127-1279) or Jin (1115-1234) dynasty, second quarter of the 13th century. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Archibald Cary Coolidge Fund, 34.1460.

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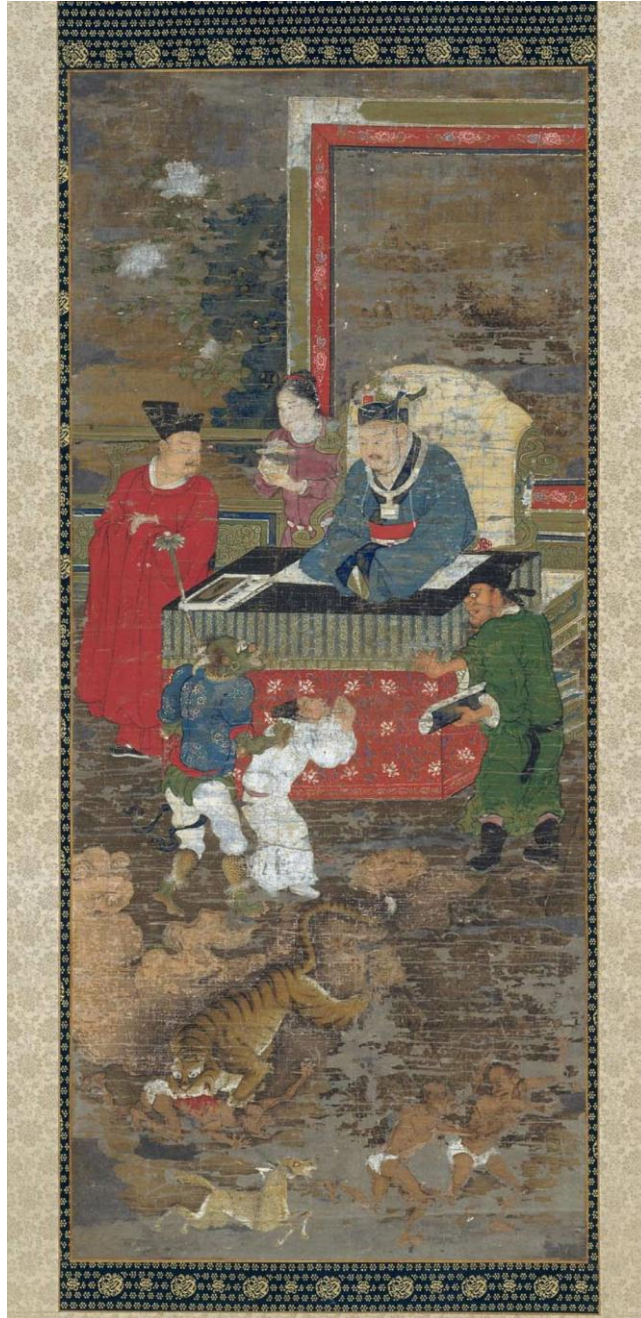


Figure 2.78

Jin Chushi 金處士 (act. late 12th to 13th centuries), *Dushi wang* 都市王, ninth of the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 107.5 cm x 47.4 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), late 12th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Denman Waldo Ross Collection, 07.1.

Photograph © 2013 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. All rights reserved.



Figure 2.79

Zhang Sigong 張思恭 (act. late 12th to 13th centuries), *Amitābha Triad* 阿彌陀三尊像; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 150.5 cm x 92.0 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1180.

Collection of Chion-in 知恩院, Kyoto, Japan.

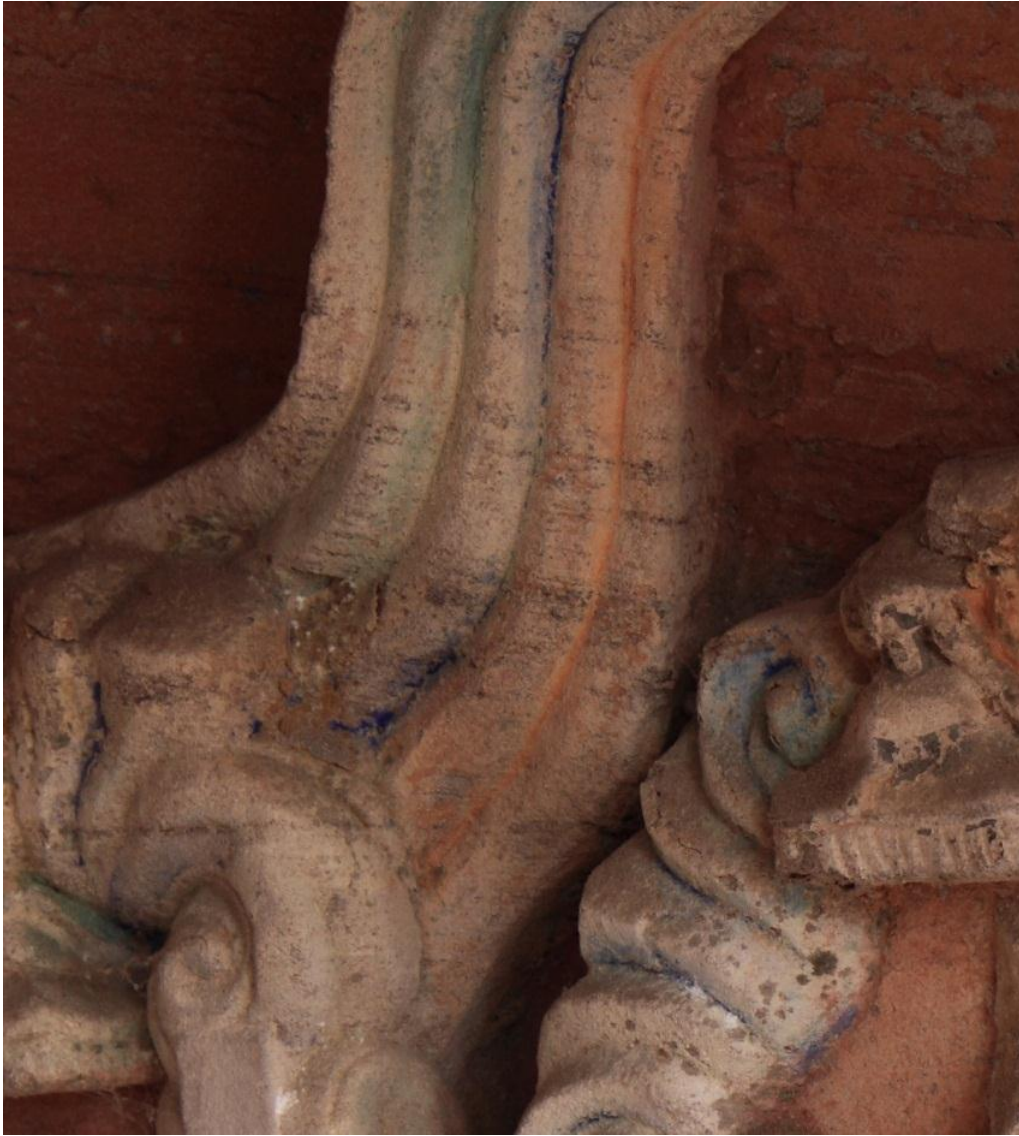


Figure 2.80

Detail of five-colored clouds 五色雲.

Kṣitigarbha 地藏, Avalokiteśvara 觀音, and the Ten Kings of Purgatory 十王; carved and polychromed gray sandstone; 1.57 m x 1.22 m x .86 m; carved in the Five Dynasties (907-960) or early Northern Song dynasty (960-1127), repainted in 994, and inscribed in 1001. Niche 253, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 2.81

Kṣitigarbha, King Guang of Qin, King of the Chu River, King Di of Song, and the King of the Five Offices 地藏菩薩秦廣楚江宋帝五官; ink and colors on silk; 117 cm x 61.5 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 2.82

Lin Tinggui 林庭珪, *Flight of the Devas* 天人飛來, twenty-second of one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.5 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.
Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 2.83

Kneeling bodhisattva, h. 2.40m.

Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞 (Cave of Perfect Enlightenment); carved and polychromed sandstone; 6.02 m x 9.55 m x 12.13 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Cave 29, Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain), Dazhu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 2.84

Detail of kneeling figure.

Perfect Enlightenment Sutra Illumination 圓覺經變相圖; ink and colors on silk; 165.5 cm x 85.5 cm; Goryeo dynasty (918-1392), late 13th to early 14th century.

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; William Sturgis Bigelow Collection, 11.6142.

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Figure 2.85

Huayan dong 華嚴洞 (Avatamsaka Cave); carved and polychromed sandstone; 6.2 m x 10.1 m x 11.3 m, Northern Song (960-1127) dynasty).

Huayan dong cun 華嚴洞村, Shiyang zhen 石羊鎮, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province, China.

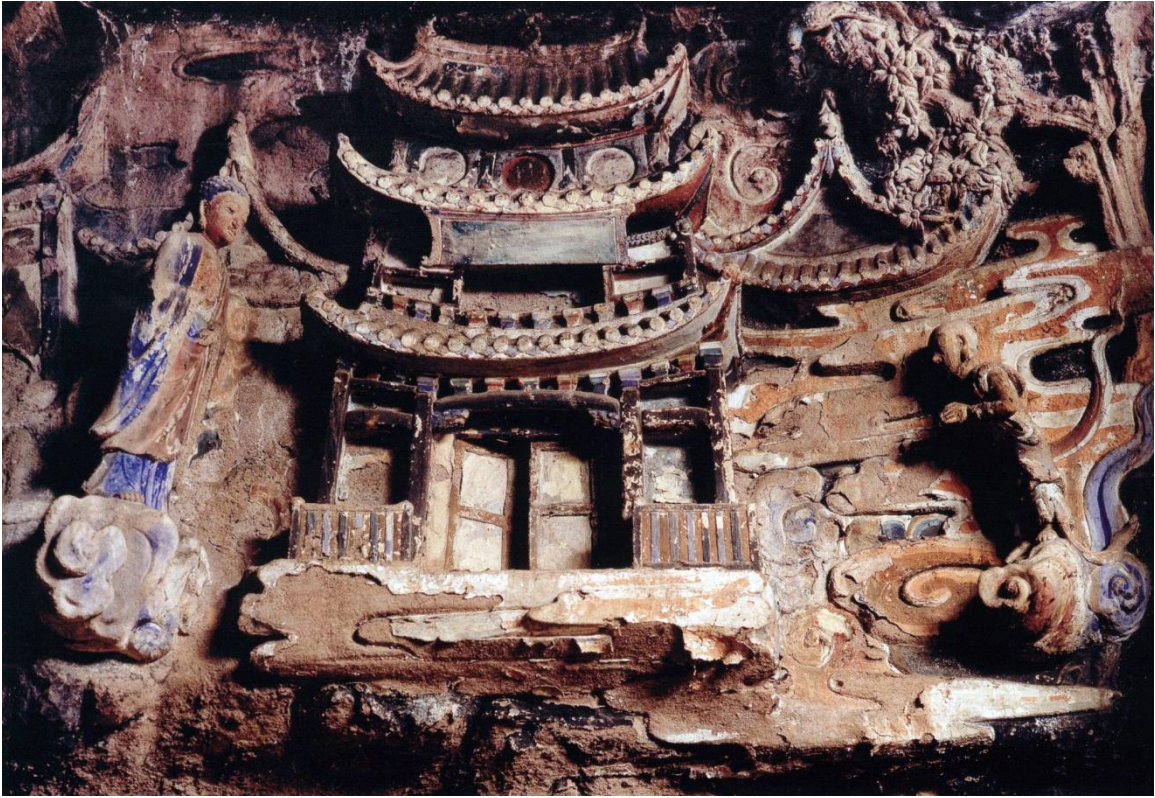


Figure 2.86

Detail of a scene of Sudhana's pilgrimage.

Huayan dong 華嚴洞 (Avatamsaka Cave); carved and polychromed sandstone; 6.2 m x 10.1 m x 11.3 m; Northern Song (960-1127) dynasty.

Huayan dong cun 華嚴洞村, Shiyang zhen 石羊鎮, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province, China.



Figure 2.87

Visualization Sutra tableau 觀無量壽經變相; carved and polychromed sandstone; 8.10 m x 20.20 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Niche 18, Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 2.88

Detail of children.

Visualization Sutra tableau 觀無量壽經變相; carved and polychromed sandstone; 8.10 m x 20.20 m; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.

Niche 18, Baoding shan 寶頂山 (Treasure Summit Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.



Figure 2.89

Revolving sutra case 轉輪經藏; carved and polychromed sandstone; 4.05 m x 4.10 m x 6.79 m;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1142-1146.
Niche 136, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality,
China.



Figure 2.90

Detail of children.

Revolving sutra case 轉輪經藏; carved and polychromed sandstone; 4.05 m x 4.10 m x 6.79 m;

Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1142-1146.

Niche 136, Bei shan 北山 (North Mountain), Dazu County 大足縣, Chongqing Municipality, China.

Part 3



Figure 3.1

Vairocana Buddha 毗盧遮那佛; ink and colors on silk; 147 cm x 76 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 3.2

Tai yi and the Myriad Spirits and the Emperors of the Five Directions 太一諸神五方五帝.
Shuilu daochang guishen tu 水陸道場鬼神圖; woodblock-printed ink on paper; approx. 24 cm x
 15 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), ca. 1465-1487.
 Collection of the National Library of China 中國國家圖書館, Beijing, China.



Figure 3.3

Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *Kṣitigarbha* 地藏, one of the eleven scrolls of *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 53.5 cm x 37 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Eigen-ji 永源寺, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 3.4

Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *Kṣitigarbha* 地藏菩薩像; ink and colors on silk; 87.3 cm x 52 cm;
Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Rozan-ji 廬山寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 3.5

Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory; carved sandstone; 2.0 m x 2.8 m x 0.9 m; late Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 9th century.

Niche 60, Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province.

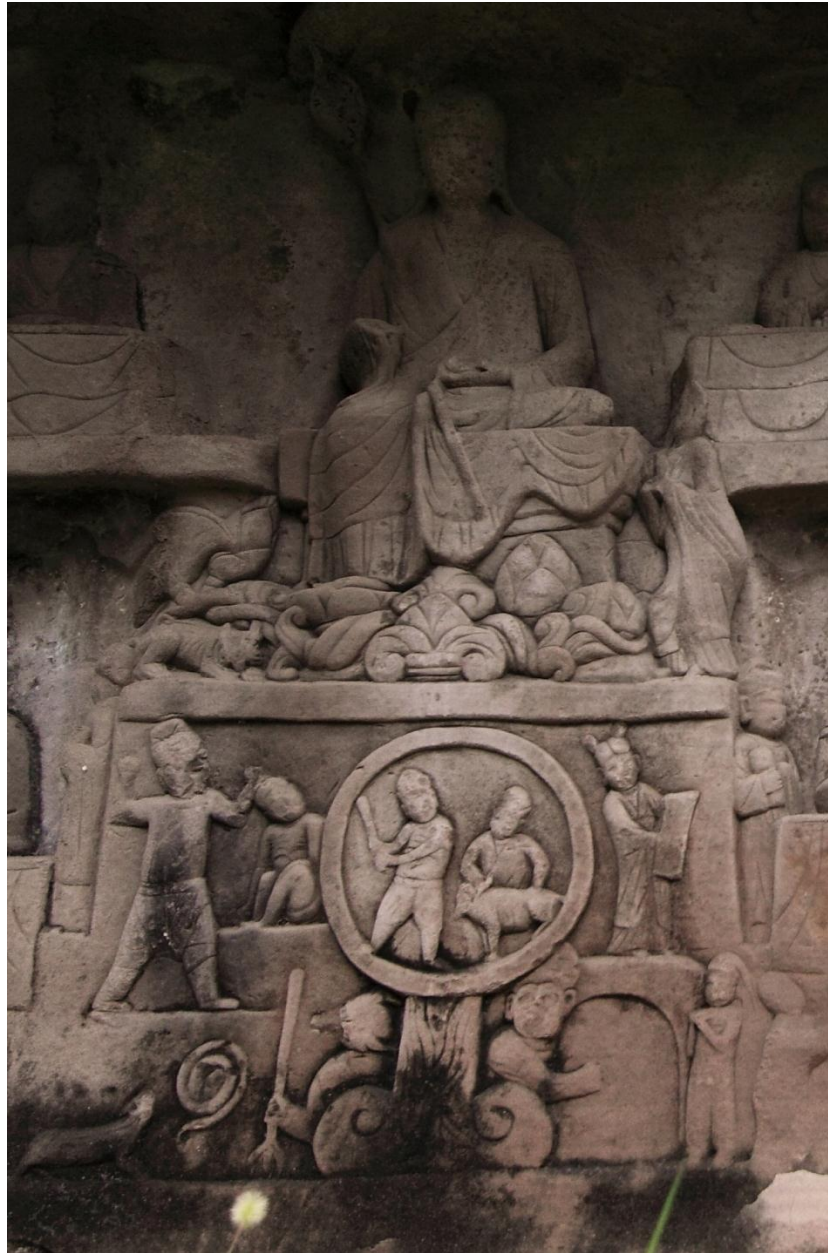


Figure 3.6

Detail of the karma mirror 業鏡.

Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings of Purgatory; carved sandstone; 2.0 m x 2.8 m x 0.9 m; late Tang dynasty (618-907), ca. 9th century.

Niche 60, Yuanjue dong 圓覺洞, Anyue County 安岳縣, Sichuan Province.



Figure 3.7

Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *King Yama* 閻羅大王, one of the eleven scrolls of *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 53.5 cm x 37 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, ca. 13th or 14th century.
Collection of Eigen-ji 永源寺, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 3.8

Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *The King who Turns the Wheel of the Five Paths* 五道轉輪王, one of the eleven scrolls of *Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings* 地藏十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 53.5 cm x 37.0 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) or Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, ca. 13th or 14th century.

Collection of Eigen-ji 永源寺, Shiga Prefecture, Japan.



Figure 3.9

Lu Zhongyuan 陸仲淵, *King Yama* 閻羅大王, one of three scrolls of the *Ten Kings* 十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 85.9 cm x 50.8 cm; Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty, ca. 13th or 14th century.

Collection of the Nara National Museum 奈良国立博物館, Nara, Japan.



Figure 3.10

Studio of Jin Chushi 金處士家, *King Yama* 閻羅大王; ink and colors on silk; 111.8 x 47.6 cm;
Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 12th century.
Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (30.76.293).



Figure 3.11

Lu Xinzong 陸信忠, *King Guang of Qin* 秦廣王, one of the ten scrolls of the *Ten Kings* 十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 83.2 cm x 47.0 cm; Southern Song (1127-1279) dynasty, 13th century.
Collection of the Nara National Museum 奈良国立博物館, Nara, Japan.



Figure 3.12

The Four Messengers in Charge of the Year, Month, Day, and Hour 年月日時四直功曹使者; ink and colors on silk; 118 cm x 61.5 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century. Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 3.13

The State- and Populace-Protecting Gods of the City, Earth, Monastery, etc. 護國護民城隍社廟土地殿塔伽藍等眾; ink and colors on silk; 147 cm x 76 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), early 16th century.

Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Treasured Tranquility), Youyu County 右玉縣, Shanxi Province, China. Now in the collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum 山西省博物館, Taiyuan 太原, Shanxi Province, China.



Figure 3.14

Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Lower Realm 下界持符使者; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 90 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454.

Collection of the Mus ée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 659).



Figure 3.15

Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Middle Realm 中界持符使者; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 140 cm x 90 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454.
Collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 696).



Figure 3.16

Tally-Bearing Messenger of the Buddha's Assembly 佛會持符使者; ink, colors, and gold on silk;
140 cm x 90 cm; Ming dynasty (1368-1644), 1454.
Collection of the Musée national des arts asiatiques Guimet, Paris, France (EO 681).



Figure 3.17

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Flight to the Feet of a King of Purgatory* 十王のもとへの飛来, fifth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 110.5 cm x 51.7 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 3.18

Studio of Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Flight (Offering Saint of Huian [yuan])* 飛来 (慧安打供聖者), fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.6 cm x 53.1 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), ca. 1178-1188.

Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 3.19

Zhou Jichang 周季常, *Spirit General and Ghost* 神将と鬼人, seventy-fourth of the one hundred scrolls of the *Five Hundred Arhats* 五百羅漢圖; ink, colors, and gold on silk; 111.6 cm x 53.8 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 1178. Collection of Daitoku-ji 大徳寺, Kyoto, Japan.



Figure 3.20

Infernal Messenger 冥使圖; one scroll from a set of *Ten Kings* 十王圖; ink and colors on silk; 92.5 cm x 44.5 cm; Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279), 13th century.
Collection of the Kanagawa Prefectural Museum of Cultural History 神奈川県立歴史博物館, Yokohama, Japan.

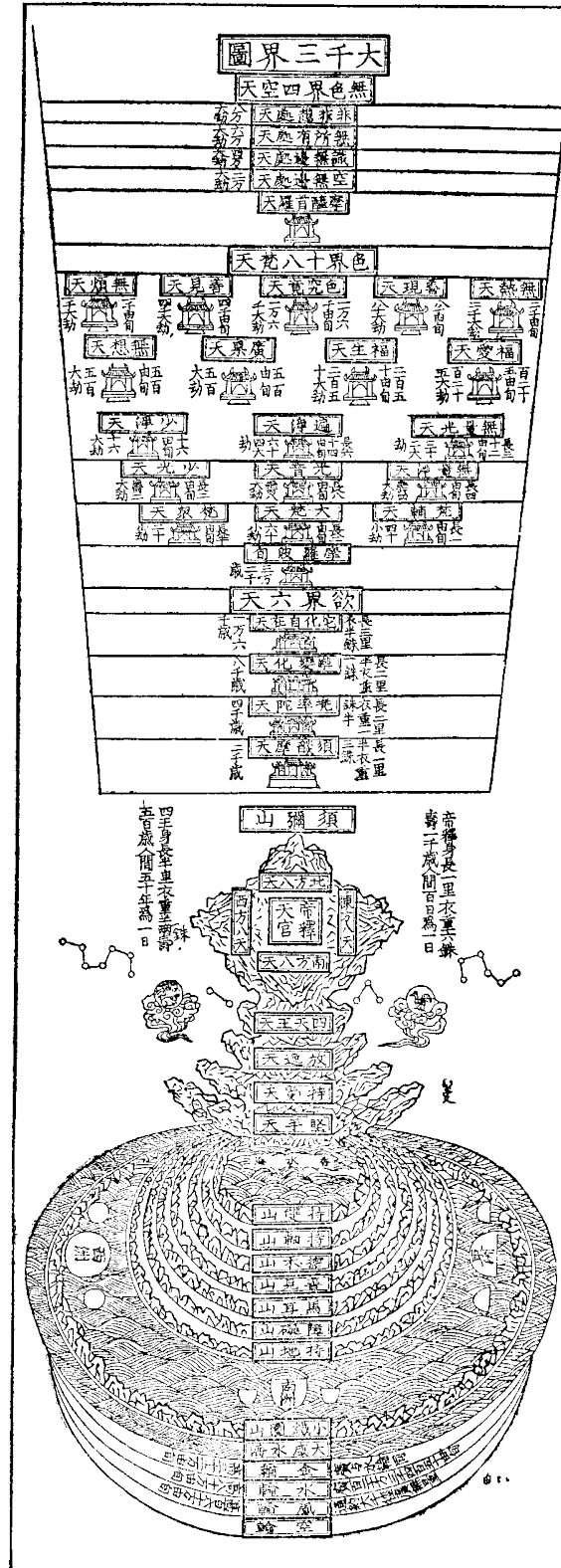


Figure 3.21
Diagram of the Cosmos.